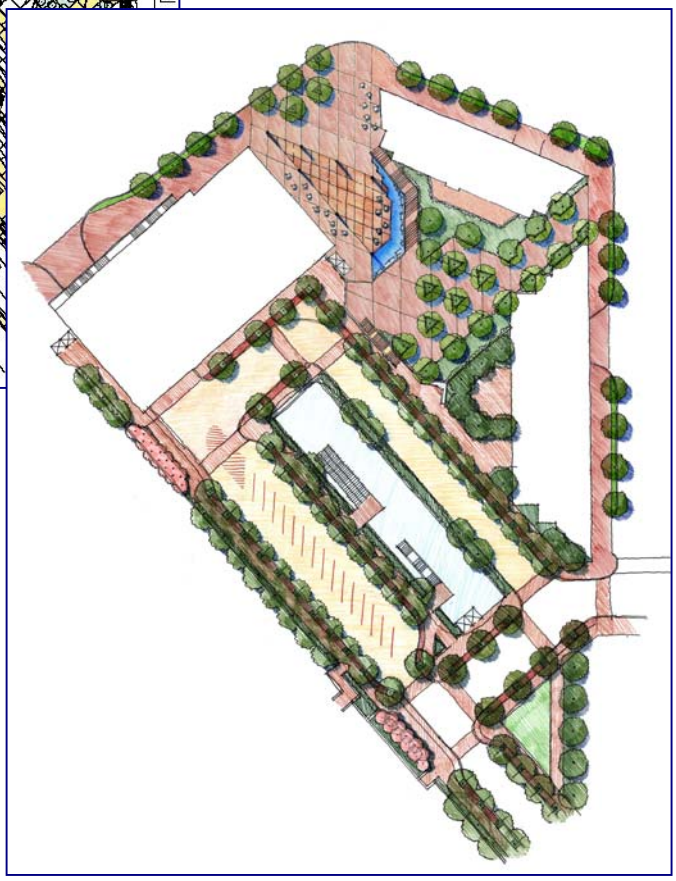
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER

A MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT CENTER

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION



December, 2004
DRAFT

Maryland Department of Transportation

MTA Maryland

Executive Summary

Prepared By The

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Montgomery County
Department of Public Works and Transportation

In Cooperation With The

Maryland Transit Administration

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

The purpose of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Section 4(f) Evaluation is to determine the significance of potential impacts to natural and man-made resources. This document was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Maryland Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), and requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Transit Administration (USDOT/FTA) and the Maryland Department of Transportation/ Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT/MTA).

This EA and Section 4(f) Evaluation is submitted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, §102, 42 U.S.C. §4332; Federal Transit Laws, Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, §5301(e), §5323(b) and §5324(b); Title 49 U.S.C. §303, formerly Department of Transportation Act of 1966, §4(f); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, §106, 16 U.S.C. §470(f); Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands); Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management); Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice); and Maryland Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 11.01.08.

Description of Action/ Purpose and Need

For Additional Information:

Please Contact

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Montgomery County - Department of Public Works and Transportation
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The Silver Spring Transit Center is a multi-modal project that will replace an aging transit facility that was built approximately 30 years ago by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in downtown Silver Spring. While the 1975 Sector Plan for the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) envisioned the CBD as a dominant downtown area, it actually fell into a state of decay and economic obsolescence. Since that time Silver Spring has, through aggressive efforts and investment by Montgomery County, the State of Maryland and the private sector, emerged from blighted conditions and is enjoying very strong economic growth.

Existing operations at the Silver Spring METRO Station are not in keeping with the surrounding development and are inefficient from the standpoint of bus, vehicle and pedestrian use. Further, the existing urban open space park needs substantial improvement to function as a positive urban open space. Improvements to the METRO Station are necessary based on the explosion of development around Silver Spring, the confluence of new regional bike trails at the Silver Spring METRO Station, the existing bus and rail uses, and the proposed Bi-County Transitway.

The Transit Center is intended to bring together and improve the efficiency of Metrorail, regional Metrobuses, Montgomery County Ride-On buses, Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC) trains, pedestrian traffic, vehicular traffic, the terminii of several bicycle trails, intercity bus, and the future Bi-County Transitway (the

Project). The Project will include the Transit Center, an urban park, a pedestrian promenade, and certain road and traffic improvements. It is located in the Silver Spring Central Business District, an Arts and Entertainment District and an Enterprise Zone and, to optimize both revenue and mass transit usage, has been designed to allow for transit-oriented/joint development around the perimeter of the Project.

The transit-oriented development around the Transit Center will be privately financed but, because it is to be located on property that was originally purchased with federal funds, the public sponsors of the project will realize a financial return in the form of a capitalized lease. Additionally, the private development will result in direct land revenues and tax revenues to the State of Maryland and Montgomery County from land, which currently generates no such revenues.

An Environmental Assessment was published in 2000 when the project included the Transit Center, only. During FTA review of the EA, WMATA began solicitation for private development on the project site, which resulted in the current EA and Section 4(f) Evaluation and Preferred Alternative.

The Project will be a redevelopment of the WMATA METRO Station located in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland. It will be a multi-level, pedestrian friendly complex supporting rail traffic (METRO and MARC), bus traffic (regional, local and inter-city), and automobile traffic (taxi and kiss-and-ride). The Project includes the following components:

- Bus bays for WMATA and Montgomery County buses, an intercity bus terminal with ticketing facilities and bus bays, kiss-and-ride spaces, taxi spaces, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- A 3-tier intermodal Transit Center capable of handling 250 buses per hour
- An open space park and pedestrian plaza
- Infrastructure (road improvements and utility connections).

The Project's design was developed to meet existing and future transit needs, allow for the safe and convenient transfer from one mode of travel to another, and accommodate joint development opportunities that would support and contribute to the revitalization of Silver Spring.

The Project's transit-oriented/joint development will include:

- A 9 to 12-story office building accommodating approximately 200,000 gross square feet of class A office space and approximately 250 parking spaces

- A 9 to 12-story full-service hotel with approximately 195 rooms
- A 10 to 14-story residential building with approximately 260 units
- A 3-tier, 400-space underground parking structure to serve the hotel and residential buildings.

Potential Effects

The "Environmental Resources and Determination of Effects" section of this EA identifies the potential effects and mitigation measures associated with the proposed Project. This EA evaluates the two components of the Project – the Transit Center and the transit-oriented/joint development – as one to address their combined effects; therefore, this EA reflects total project impacts. The environmental impacts expected from the Project are minimal because the proposed Project is similar in nature to the site's existing use.

The Project involves no acquisition of private property and, upon completion, will not impact neighborhoods and community facilities; wetlands; floodplains; water resources; rare, threatened, and endangered species; hazardous materials; or historic and archaeological resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Project will affect stormwater quantity and quality (as a result of the increase of impervious surface areas), utilities, urban wildlife (temporary construction impacts), noise (imperceptible changes), and improve vehicle and pedestrian safety.

There will be secondary effects from the transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project – traffic analyses indicate that this development will generate approximately 600 new peak hour trips to the site, which includes 162 bus trips and approximately 450 automobile trips in the peak hour that will require parking that will be accommodated on-site. The Project includes two separate parking facilities; a 250-space garage under the office building, and a 400-space garage under the hotel. The garage will provide the parking needs for both the hotel and the residential building, as well as provide for some parking for the office building. Some commuters to the site will choose to park off-site and the existing municipal garages will absorb the extra parking demand. The transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project will not have other impacts.

Although the Project will displace the existing Metro Urban Park, the Project will provide a replacement open space park on the project site that will be the same size and be functionally and qualitatively better than the open space that currently exists. Moreover, the agreement pursuant to which the open space park

easement was created, expressly contemplated and provided for entry upon the area for construction of commercial development with the requirement that the park be restored or, if not capable of restoration, being modified in a manner to preserve the general integrity or overall purpose of the open space. That requirement is satisfied by the improved, on-site replacement of the open space park.

The Project is located in an area with proportionately higher percentages of minority populations and low-income populations compared with the County; however, any impacts will be of a beneficial nature. The Project will consolidate transportation facilities in a single location, improve pedestrian safety, and facilitate access to social and transportation services for patrons in the project area, the County and the region. Residents, employees, and visitors to the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) will benefit from enhanced transit facilities, improved traffic circulation, easier access, increased pedestrian safety and mobility, and increased housing, employment, and retail opportunities.

The Project is consistent with area Master Plans and Maryland's Priority Places Strategy.

Comments on this Document

Comments on this document may be submitted in writing on the following comment form. Comments received during the public involvement phases of the Project and prior to publication of this Environmental Assessment have been addressed in the preparation of the document. Written comments should be sent to:

Mr. Shri Gondhalekar
Division of Capital Development
Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation
101 Monroe Street, 11th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850.

Comments must be received by February 7, 2005.

COMMENT FORM

Silver Spring Transit Center Project

This form is provided for written comments and may be mailed to the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation. The comment period ends February 7, 2005. Please send comments to:

Mr. Shri Gondhalekar
Division of Capital Development
Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation
101 Monroe Street, 11th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Comment:

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(Use additional sheets if needed)

From: (Please provide your contact information below)

Name: _____

Group/Affiliation:_____

Address: _____

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Daytime Telephone:_____

Email Address:_____

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Project Location, Description and Surrounding Area

Washington DC Region

The project site is located in the Silver Spring CBD and Urban Maintenance District in Montgomery County, Maryland (Figure 1). The Silver Spring CBD is an important commercial and business destination that is undergoing extensive revitalization including new construction and adaptive reuse of old buildings. The site is generally in an area that has been considered in a state of decay. It is adjacent to an urban renewal area and is within an area designated both as an enterprise zone and an arts and entertainment district. The enterprise zone and arts and entertainment district designations are tax credit vehicles to create incentives for certain types of development. The areas surrounding the site are responding to these incentives and undergoing extensive redevelopment and intensification of development.

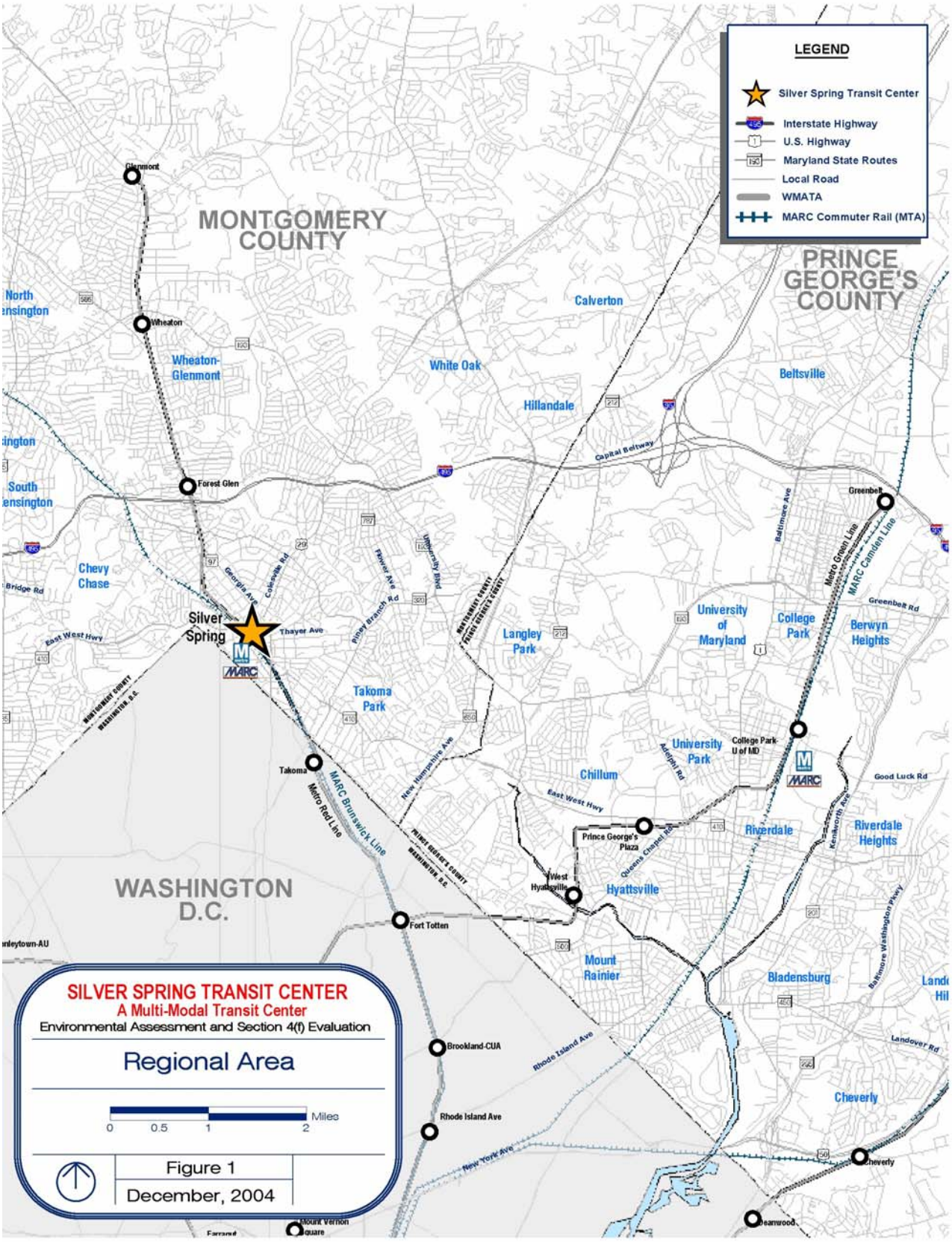
The project site is bounded on the west by the CSXT/METRO railroad tracks, on the south by Bonifant and Ripley Streets, on the north by Colesville Road, and on the east by Ramsey Avenue (Figure 2). The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) owns 4 acres of the site that includes the Silver Spring METRO Station, MARC Station, WMATA bus loop, Montgomery County Ride-On bus bays, kiss-and-ride lot, and the Metro Urban Park (a 0.77-acre public park). Public right-of-way comprises 1.42 acres along Ripley Street, Bonifant Street, Ramsey Avenue, Wayne Avenue and the existing "jug handle". The "jug handle" is located at the northeast corner of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue and is a "Bus Only" entrance and exit to the existing Transit Center. Montgomery County owns the remainder of the site (1.13-acres).

The Transit Center will be a multi-level, pedestrian friendly complex supporting rail traffic (METRO and MARC), bus traffic (local and inter-city), automobile traffic (taxi and kiss-and-ride), and connections to existing and future recreational trail and transportation systems (Capital Crescent Trail and the Bi-County Transitway). The Project will also include public spaces consisting of an urban park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza. The private component of the Project will include an office building with parking, retail space, a residential building and hotel with underground parking serving both.

The Project includes the following components:

- Bus bays for WMATA and Montgomery County buses, an intercity bus terminal with ticketing facilities and bus bays, kiss-and-ride spaces, taxi spaces, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- A 3-tier intermodal Transit Center capable of handling 250 buses per hour
- An open space park and pedestrian promenade

Purpose and Need



Purpose and Need

Photo of existing Silver Spring METRO Station and Transit Center

- Infrastructure (road improvements and utility connections).

The transit-oriented/joint development will include:

- A 9 to 12-story office building accommodating approximately 200,000 gross square feet of class A office space and approximately 250 parking spaces
- A 9 to 12-story full-service hotel with approximately 195 rooms
- A 10 to 14-story residential building with approximately 260 units
- A 3-tier, 400-space underground parking structure to serve the hotel and residential buildings.

The existing facility was built approximately 30 years ago. Due to concerted governmental intervention and investment, downtown Silver Spring is experiencing extensive economic growth. Public investment includes $187 million in the retail urban renewal area (one block from the Project site), $27 million in the District Court Building (one block from the Project site), $2 million in improvements to the City Place Shopping Center (2 blocks from the site), and other extensive investments. The site is adjacent to federal facilities as well (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, GSA, United States Health and Human Services, etc.) The Project would support existing establishments, recent developments, and other projects in various stages of development and construction. To understand the site, it is important to understand what surrounds it. The surrounding environment includes:

- The recently completed world headquarters for Discovery Communications, Inc. consisting of approximately 550,000 square feet of office space and 1500 jobs (immediately adjacent to the Project site);
- The recently completed Discovery Creative Technology Center consisting of approximately 125,000 square feet of office space and 400 jobs;
- The Silver Spring Innovation Center with office space created for the express purpose of creating high technology start up businesses in downtown Silver Spring;
- The private component of the recently completed Downtown Silver Spring Redevelopment Project (one block from the Project site) containing approximately 400,000 square feet of retail and restaurants, approximately 170,000 square feet of office, a hotel of approximately 175 rooms, and, a movie theater with 20 screens and 4,500 seats;
- The public component of the Downtown Silver Spring Redevelopment Project consisting of:

- The AFI Silver Theatre – rehabilitation of the historic Silver Theatre to serve as the east coast home of the American Film Institute. The American Film Institute was initially created by Congress as the historian of the moving image and has achieved prominence and prestige in carrying out its Congressional mandate;
- The Round House Black Box Theatre – a theatre for the performing arts located next to the AFI Silver Theatre;
- The Round House Theatre Education Center;
- Two public parking garages, one with approximately 1,732 public parking spaces and one with approximately 1,400 public parking spaces;
- Three public plazas (Silver Plaza and Gateway Plaza are complete and Veteran's Plaza is being designed);
- A 43,000 square foot civic building which is currently under design; and
- Extensive streetscaping and subsurface relocation of utilities.

- A new urban library is planned for the area
- City Place Shopping Center with approximately 325,000 square feet of retail space;
- The world headquarters for United Therapeutics which is currently under construction and will be 148,598 square feet of office space with a 48,434 square foot laboratory for production of a promising treatment for ovarian cancer with a total employee count of approximately 450 employees plus 16,000 square feet of retail;
- Art Walk pedestrian pathway project, which is currently underway to create active and inviting pedestrian links throughout South Silver Spring;
- A number of new residential projects totaling approximately 1,900 additional units of residential space are in varying stages of development around the Project site:
  - Ripley Street – 336 dwelling units with approximately 6,000 square feet of retail
  - Williams and Willste – approximately 135 dwelling units
  - Grammax – 180 dwelling units
  - 8045 Newell Street – 120 dwelling units
  - 930 Wayne Avenue – 143 dwelling units and 2,300 square feet of retail
  - The Portico – 158 dwelling units

- Cameron Hill Townhouses – 57 dwelling units
- Easter Village Co-housing – 55 dwelling units
- Silver Spring Gateway – approximately 477 dwelling units and approximately 52,000 square feet of retail
- Canada Dry Site – 220 dwelling units
- Lofts 24 – 24 dwelling units
- The Bennington – 223 dwelling units
- The Blair Towns – 78 dwelling units

- Redevelopment of Park and Planning site
- Expansion of Montgomery College
- Easter Seals Headquarters – approximately 50,000 square feet.

In addition to the above described new construction there is approximately 6 million square feet of existing office space in the Silver Spring CBD much of which developed after the existing facility was constructed and approximately 5,000 units of preexisting housing, four hotels, and retail uses – all within walking distance of the Project site.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Project is to:

- Meet the existing and future transit needs of Silver Spring and the surrounding area
- Allow for the safe and convenient transfer of people from one mode of travel to another and eliminate conflicts at existing facility
- Support and contribute to the revitalization of Silver Spring
- Encourage increased transit ridership.

Photo of existing Silver Spring METRO Station and Transit Center

Meet existing and future transit needs

The Silver Spring METRO Station, one of the busiest transit facilities in the region, currently serves approximately 57,000 boardings and alightings a day with 1,250 buses, Metrorail trains, MARC trains and taxis. During the next 20 years, it is anticipated that the peak hour bus volumes will increase from the existing 145 buses/hour to 220 buses/hour. The increased transit trips are projected due to the anticipated growth in residential and employment in the area. By year 2025, the number of boardings and alightings is expected to increase by 70% to approximately 97,000, of which 39,000 are bus boardings and alightings. The current facility cannot accommodate the projected transportation demand.

The Project will accommodate this increase in demand by improving the configuration of the transit center. The current transit center is operating at nearly full capacity not because of number of patrons, but because of the single level configuration, and inadequate number of bus bays. The existing loop as well as layover areas along Ramsey Avenue and Bonifant Street are congested at peak periods causing delays and less than desirable service and pedestrian situations. Non-signalized bus crossings of Wayne Avenue and northbound Colesville Road also contribute to the operational deficiencies. With the reconfiguration of the transit center and using conservative assumptions, such as 6 buses per bay per hour, the new facility potentially could handle 67,000 bus boardings and alightings, as well as the projected rail ridership increases. Even greater demand could be addressed through an intelligent transportation system planned for the Project.

Currently, there is no intercity bus service that transfers with public transit at the Silver Spring METRO Station. The nearest facility is located over 1/2 mile walking distance to the Silver Spring METRO Station. That facility has approximately 40 buses scheduled daily. Provision of intercity bus facilities at the Silver Spring Transit Center will enable better use of public transportation.

The Project will accommodate increased patronage and transit services by maximizing the use of space with two bi-directional loops, improving the pedestrian circulation surrounding the Transit Center with multiple pathways and multiple vertical circulation elements thus dispersing pedestrian movements, meeting current ADA requirements, meeting WMATA design standards and improving pedestrian and bicycle access surrounding and within the Transit Center. The Transit Center will consolidate multiple bus boarding and staging areas from the surrounding streets into the Transit Center, promoting more efficient transit operations. The Project will incorporate bus bays and a ticketing area for an intercity bus service enhancing intermodal connections.

Allow for safe and convenient transfers

Substantial traffic circulation problems currently exist in the vicinity of the Silver Spring METRO Station due to the existing jug handle, which provides bus access to the main bus loop. The large number of curb cuts within the jug handle, located at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Avenue, causes conflicts between buses, cars, and pedestrians accessing the station. The Project modifies the jug handle and creates new circulation patterns that will increase safety. The Project will improve pedestrian access to the site and reduce conflicts with vehicle movements. Table 1 presents accident statistics in the project area.

Table 1: Accident Statistics (2000-2002)

Segment or Intersection	Type	Accidents	Corridor Accident Rate (per Million Vehicle Miles)	Statewide Accident Rate (per Million Vehicle Miles)
Colesville Road (MD 384) – MD 410 to US 29 / MD 97	Fatal	0	0 per MVM	0.19 per MVM
Colesville Road (MD 384) – MD 410 to US 29 / MD 97	Injury	16	0.44 per MVM	5.47 per MVM
Georgia Avenue (US 29) – Thayer Avenue to MD 97 / MD 384	Fatal	0	0 per MVM	0.19 per MVM
Georgia Avenue (US 29) – Thayer Avenue to MD 97 / MD 384	Injury	32	0.58 per MVM	5.47 per MVM

Support and contribute to the revitalization of Silver Spring

The *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (M-NCPPC, 2001) outlines a revitalization approach for the downtown area that combines public and private investment to create a focal point of community, civic, and cultural life. Several major development projects with extensive public and private investment have been completed or are underway as more specifically discussed previously.

The design of the existing Silver Spring METRO Station does not reflect the prominence of one of the most heavily used transit facility in the State of Maryland nor does it complement the surrounding architecture of the Silver Spring CBD. The site is the central transit hub for the CBD. The Project will establish a strong overall architectural statement that promotes the use of public transit and contributes to the revitalization of the Silver Spring CBD. The Project will help meet the demand put on mass transit by these projects and will bring the transit facilities qualitatively into line with the surrounding areas. It will also bring the infrastructure to current standards of surrounding new development. The Project will create transit-oriented development in accordance with Maryland's Priority Places Strategy.

Encourage increased transit ridership

The Project supports WMATA's *Regional Bus Study* goals for attracting new riders by offering higher quality service and meeting the growing transit demand. The improved station environs is expected to increase transit mode share for trips between the greater Silver Spring area and the District of Columbia, in addition to the new trips from the development proposed on the site. Any increase in transit mode share has a beneficial impact to air quality, use of natural resources, and traffic congestion, which help the region to move away from ozone non-attainment status.

The Project will also allow for convergence and accommodation of planned major transportation corridors (Bi-County Transitway and DC/Georgia Avenue corridors).

Purpose and Need

Purpose of the Environmental Assessment

The Montgomery County – Department of Public Works and Transportation has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) and Section 4(f) Evaluation to determine the significance of potential impacts of the proposed project and to identify avoidance and mitigation measures to eliminate or lessen any adverse impacts. This EA evaluates the two components of the proposed project – the Transit Center and the transit-oriented/joint development – as one to address their combined effects; therefore, this EA reflects total project impacts.

The transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project will not affect the operation of the Transit Center but will improve and enhance its effectiveness by placing high-density, mixed-use development near the transportation facility – maximizing transit, bicycle and pedestrian access, and increasing travel efficiencies that result when many activities are physically close together. The site operations improve for several reasons. First, the new site reduces curb cuts along Wayne Avenue, which will reduce congestion. Secondly, transit access into the site will be spread out into two locations, which will also ease bus congestion into and out of the site. Third, bi-directional bus loops improve the circulation of buses within the site. Finally, all of these improvements will eliminate buses blocking Wayne Avenue, which will allow the entire area to function more effectively.

During the next 20 years, it is anticipated that the number of bus trips per hour will double due to increased ridership. The increased transit trips are projected due to the anticipated growth in residential and employment in the area. By year 2025, the number of patrons is expected to increase by 70% to approximately 97,000. The Project will accommodate the expected increase in patronage and transit services by relocating the majority of bus operations to within the Transit Center and improving vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation in and around the Transit Center. The improved station and surrounding area are expected to increase transit mode share for trips between the greater Silver Spring vicinity and the District of Columbia, in addition to the new trips from the joint development proposed on the site. An increase in transit mode share benefits air quality by reducing traffic congestion.

There will be secondary effects from the transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project – traffic analyses indicate that this development will generate approximately 600 new peak hour trips to the site, which includes 162 bus trips and approximately 450 automobile trips in the peak hour that will require parking that will be accommodated on-site. The Project includes two separate parking facilities; a 250-space garage under the office building, and a 400-space garage under the hotel. The garage will provide the parking needs for both the hotel and the residential building, as well as provide for some parking for the

office building. Some commuters to the site will choose to park off-site and the existing municipal garages will absorb the extra parking demand. The transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project will have no other impacts.

Following the preparation of the EA, a public hearing will be held to present the Project to the public and provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the EA document and its findings. Notice of availability of the EA and of the public hearing will be published in the local newspapers. Written comments will be accepted for a period of 15 days following publication of the EA.

After the public comment period, the EA will be revised, as necessary, to address the public's comments. All comments and responses will be submitted to FTA with the revised EA. The FTA will review the findings of the EA and decide whether the effects are significant. If the FTA evaluates the findings and concludes that the effects are not significant, a "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI), funding for final design and construction can be approved and the Project can proceed.

This document supports the request for a FONSI in accordance with the requirements set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternatives considered include the proposed action and the No-Build (baseline) Alternative against which the action is to be evaluated. The proposed action, the Silver Spring Transit Center - A Multi-Modal Transit Center (the Project), is known as the Preferred Alternative. Development of the Preferred Alternative was a collaborative and cooperative process involving the "Partners" who included FTA, MTA, SHA, Montgomery County, WMATA, a private developer, other stakeholders, and Project team members to create a design that meets the needs of the project.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build (baseline) Alternative serves as a basis for comparison of the Preferred Alternative and satisfies FTA and NEPA requirements for evaluating a "do nothing" scenario. The No-Build Alternative assumes that no major improvements to increase capacity will be undertaken to the transportation network in the study area; however, routine maintenance and spot improvements such as resurfacing, signing, and lighting are included. The No-Build Alternative maintains the existing site configuration as shown in Figure 3 and includes present conditions plus committed future projects. It includes projects adopted in the regional *2003 Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan* (CLRP), the regional *2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP), and the Maryland *Consolidated Transportation Program* (CTP).[1]

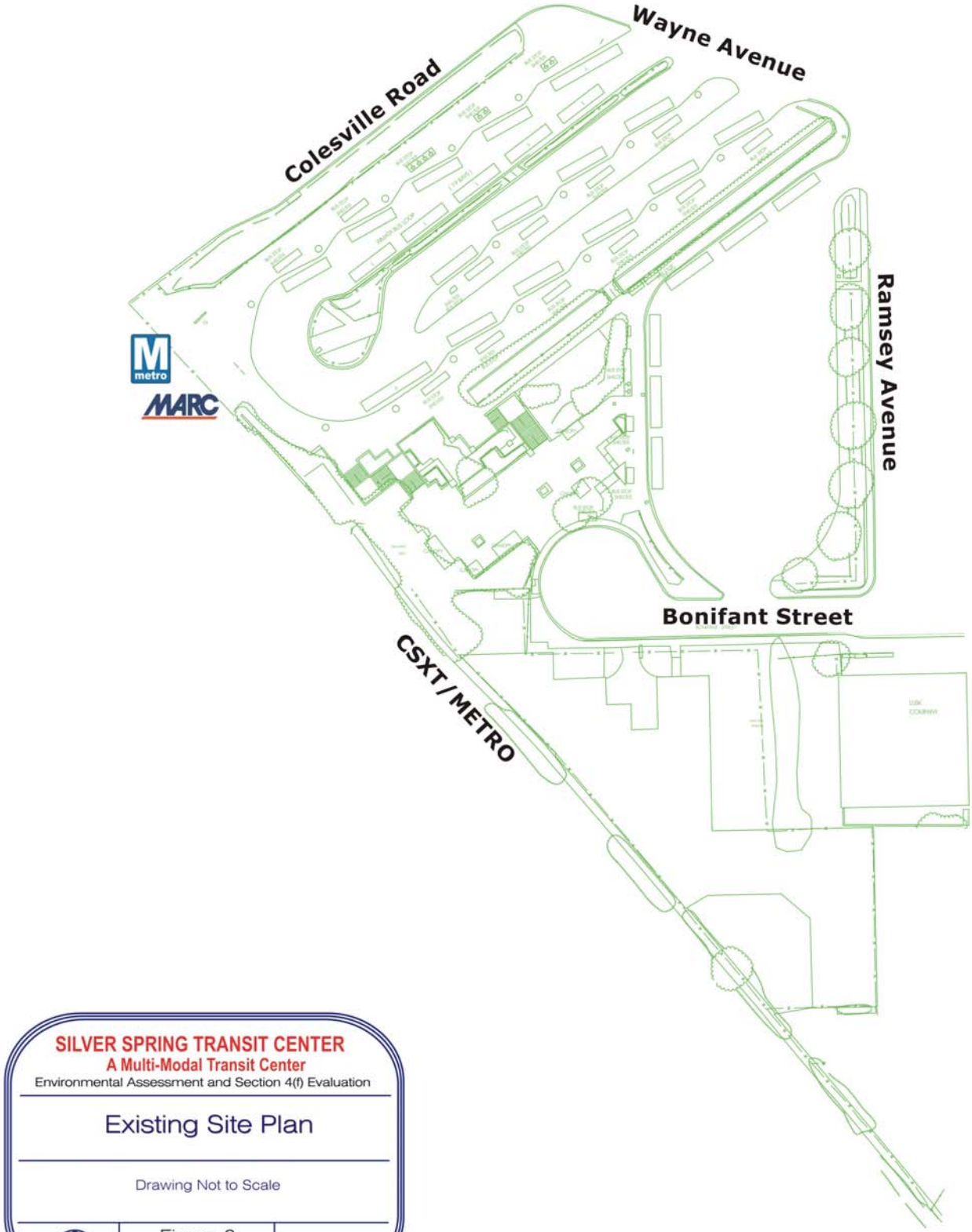
View of Existing Bus Loop

The No-Build Alternative will not affect land use, zoning, communities and facilities or natural resources, and requires no displacements. However, the No-Build Alternative will not provide an improved transportation facility that meets the needs of existing and future residents, businesses, and patrons or the Silver Spring CBD. The No-Build Alternative will not address the safety issues associated with the existing "jug handle" and will not provide safe and convenient transfers from one mode of travel to another.

View of Existing Bus Loop and METRO Station

The No-Build Alternative is not consistent with the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (M-NCPPC, 2001), which strongly endorses a new transit center to support transit-oriented development in Silver Spring. The Sector Plan states that "it is imperative that Silver Spring maximize its already considerable transportation infrastructure" and includes the Transit Center as key to not only the area's transportation goals, but its land use goals as well.

[1] The CLRP is a comprehensive plan of transportation projects and strategies that the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) realistically anticipates can be implemented over the next 30 years. The TIP provides detailed information showing which projects in the CLRP will be funded over the next six-year period. The CTP is the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT) 6-year capital budget for transportation projects.



SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Existing Site Plan

Drawing Not to Scale

Figure 3
December, 2004

The Sector Plan refers to the Transit Center as one of three significant projects in the core of Silver Spring that will be influential in shaping downtown. The No-Build Alternative will not accommodate joint development opportunities that would support and contribute to the revitalization of Silver Spring. In summary, the No-Build Alternative does not meet project needs and, therefore, was not selected as the Preferred Alternative.

Preferred Alternative

The Project will include the Transit Center, an urban park, a pedestrian promenade, and certain road and traffic improvements. It is located in the Silver Spring Central Business District adjacent to an Arts and Entertainment District and an Enterprise Zone and, to optimize both revenue and mass transit usage, has been designed to allow for transit-oriented/joint development around the perimeter of the Project.

Guiding Principles for the Transportation System:

- Strengthen pedestrian connections to the Transit Center from all areas of Silver Spring, the central core, the area southwest of the rail corridor, the East West Highway Promenade, and the Ripley District (including Capital Crescent and Metropolitan Branch trails).
- Provide for safe, comfortable and convenient pedestrian movement between trails, streets and sidewalks surrounding the Transit Center.
- Simplify on-street circulation for all modes; including rail, intra-city bus, inter-city bus, taxi, kiss-and-ride, bicycle and pedestrians.
- Achieve the best qualities of a fully multi-modal hub for the region.

The Preferred Alternative involves the redevelopment of approximately seven acres of land to create the Transit Center, an urban park, a pedestrian promenade, and certain road and traffic improvements. Montgomery County, the MTA, the WMATA and a private developer ("Partners") have been working together for the singular purpose of building the Project. Their efforts have culminated in a cohesive sequence of decision-making, built upon a comprehensive assessment of project needs, local opportunities and fiduciary obligations associated with expediting progress of the project. To optimize both revenue and mass transit usage, the Project has been designed to allow for transit-oriented/joint development around the perimeter of the Project.

Completion of the project with transit-oriented development and realization of smart growth precepts can only be achieved if development occurs as a joint public-private approach that effectively incorporates a carefully blended arrangement of key development components.

The Transit Center will be organized within a three-tier vertically integrated configuration parallel and adjacent to the Silver Spring METRO station platform at approximate floor elevations of 302', 326' and 345' in order to provide convenient service and support facilities to access Metrorail, MARC, Metrobus, Montgomery County Ride-On bus, MTA regional commuter bus, intercity bus, recreational trail resources, and the future Bi-County Transitway. The Transit Center facility will provide (Figure 4):


Wayne Avenue
Colesville Road
Hotel
Public Park
Office
Residential
Ramsey Avenue
Transit Center
CSXT/METRO
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Proposed Site Plan
Drawing Not to Scale
Figure 4
December, 2004

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Guiding Principles for Transit Facility Operations:

- Assure functionality of design.
- Provide efficient connections between all existing and anticipated transit modes.
- Assure clarity of circulation within the Transit Center, providing clear and simple orientation and way finding, including Intelligent Transportation System technologies.
- Provide a high quality transit experience for patrons.
- Minimize exposure to vehicle-oriented environments and resulting user conflicts.
- Maximize visibility and sunlight; assure high air quality.
- Create a safe, secure, maintainable and inviting environment for all users; places where people feel safe, and are safe.
- Minimize negative impacts of parking on transit access and operations.
- Serve the broadest range of needs desired of a multi-modal facility.

- Direct bus and pedestrian at-grade access at the lowest level (302') from Colesville Road at a new signalized intersection that includes fully phased pedestrian crossings to support fluid circulation and access to bus and train gates.
- Direct pedestrian access from the existing Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue intersection to the public plaza and urban park, with access to bus and train gates.
- Direct at-grade pedestrian access at the mid-level (326') near the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Avenue. Bus circulation will take place via a controlled access 5% runway ramp coming off Ramsey Avenue near Wayne Avenue. This level provides at-grade connections with the Capital Crescent Trail (or the future Bi-County Transit) alignment.
- Direct "new" local street access into the site at the highest level (345') for:
    - Kiss-and-ride
    - Taxi
    - MARC train, and
    - Connections with the Capital Crescent Trail (and the future Bi-County Transit) alignment.
- Pedestrian access connections to Bonifant Street and the future Ripley Street Extension (to be completed by others) to the east will serve as a primary entry into the proposed residential and office buildings. The Ripley Street Extension is a proposed development project that will connect Georgia Avenue to the site.

Guiding Principles for Station Area Environment and Community Design:

- Create a clear "Public Identity" for transit station access for public and private uses from Colesville Road, Trinity Place and the Ripley District.
- Reinforce the urban context: streets, sidewalks, building massing and edges, open spaces and public amenities to foster a positive urban environment in Silver Spring.
- Respect the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* in the implementation of the project.
- Optimize public awareness-of and orientation-between the project and surrounding neighborhood.
- Achieve the investment value and functional benefits of transit-oriented development.
- Maximize economically feasible and affordable program to balance with a quality development.
- Optimize a highly integrated and unified form and function.
- Minimize conflicts of phasing development over time.

Guiding Principles for Mixed Use Development:

- Create clearly identifiable and marketable high-value "Addresses" for each developer-owned use (e.g., office, retail, hotel and residential component).
- Provide appropriately scaled services and at-grade access for all functions.
- Optimize the balance of scale, density and mix of development to achieve effective return-on-investment for all partners.
- Allow for safe and convenient drop-off at key building entrances.
- Optimize orientation (sunlight access) and view potential for residential uses.
- Assure adequate parking while minimizing negative impacts of parking on all other uses.
- Create simple, efficient, and easy-to-develop footprints for uses.
- Develop quality open space and amenities for users.

- Open visibility and natural airflow throughout the Transit Center through the highest achievable ceiling elevations, access from the METRO and interior plaza elevations, and an open central core that incorporates a protective canopy over the highest level to allow daylight penetration and year-round weather protection down through the mid-level to the lower level of the Transit Center.
- Flexibility of site design and infrastructure engineering to accommodate the possibility of phased development.

The urban park and public space will serve as the centerpiece of the project, accommodating a range of passive and spontaneous pedestrian functions and assembled in a manner that effectively knits the Transit Center and the transit-oriented/joint development components together with the surrounding neighborhood into a unified configuration. The park and public space will include, at a minimum, the following:

- An on-site 0.77-acre replacement park (located primarily at elevations 312' and 326') that is visible and easily accessible from all directions to the surrounding community.
- Extensions to two open space areas that are located adjacent to the project site. These two areas consist of a traffic "jug handle" and a site called the "Ripley Triangle".

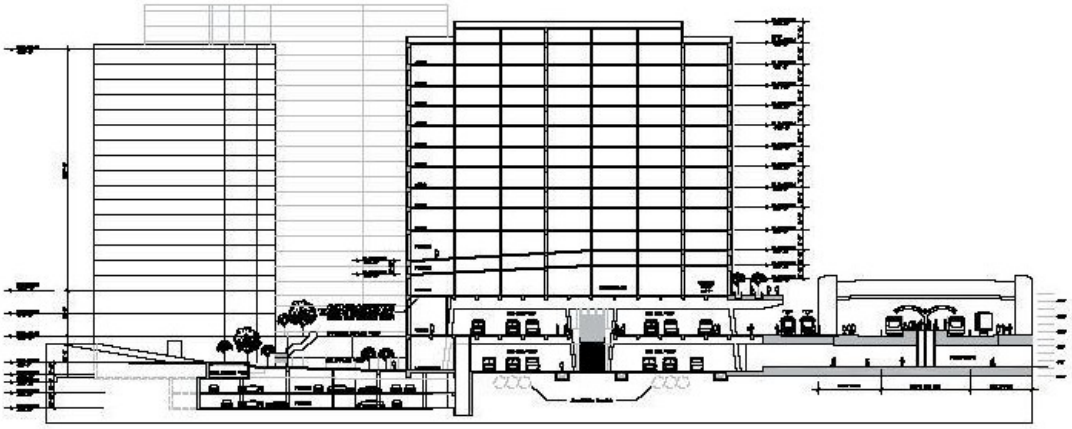
The three components of the transit-oriented/joint development will be designed in a manner to balance with the Transit Center and afford the maximum potential for pedestrian comfort/convenience, overall structural design and cost efficiency. A key aspect of development is the intent not to exceed the zoning-code controlled maximum building height of 200 feet above building entry grade for each of the three main buildings (office, hotel and residential). The key components of the transit-oriented/joint development include:

- A 220,000–250,000 gross square feet (180,000–200,000 leasable) class A office building with 250 parking spaces, located along Colesville Road and situated over the entry to the Transit Center, offering pedestrian and vehicle access from Bonifant Street and from the upper level platform of the Transit Center along the Ripley Street Extension.
- A 170 to 200-room, high quality hotel with ground floor retail (restaurant) fronting along Wayne Avenue, near the Colesville Road intersection. Primary access will be provided along Wayne Avenue as well as a central plaza for pedestrians. Automobile access will occur along Wayne Avenue for underground parking and secondary access for limited service loading will occur along Ramsey Avenue.

- A 250-unit residential building located along Ramsey Avenue situated over the access ramp to the mid-level of the Transit Center, providing ground-floor retail on to elevation 326' and lower level retail or service functions with visibility on to the central public plaza. Primary access and entry to the residential building will be provided from the 345' level platform of the Transit Center along the Ripley Street Extension.

The transit-oriented/joint development will be complemented by:

- A 400-space underground parking structure located along the northern edge of the site adjacent to Colesville Road, Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Avenue with automobile vehicle access provided along the eastern extent of Wayne Avenue adjacent to the hotel entry. The 3-tier underground parking structure, upon which the hotel and residential buildings will stand, will be designed to serve the exclusive needs of the hotel and residential components.
- Up to 25,000 square feet of retail located primarily along Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue and internally to the site at elevation 326'.



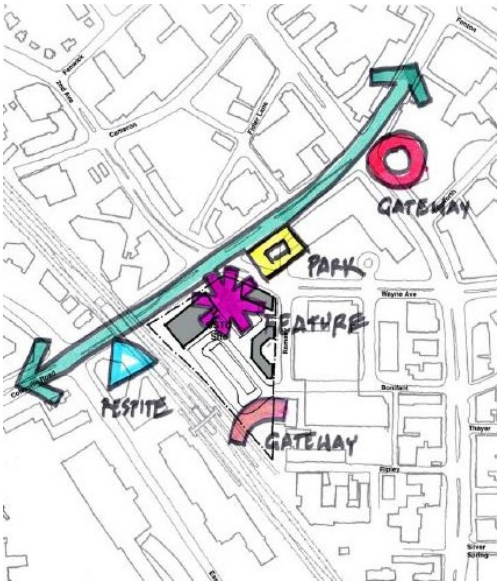
Cross-Section of project looking from Colesville Road

Environmental Resources and Determination of Effects

Natural and man-made resources, potential effects and mitigation measures associated with the Silver Spring Transit Center (the Project), the Preferred Alternative, have been identified. Analyses were conducted and assessments developed based on NEPA requirements.

Land Use and Zoning

Existing Conditions



Sequence of Experiences

The project site currently contains the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Silver Spring METRO Station, the MARC station and ancillary facilities including elevated platforms, a bus transfer facility with 26 bus bays, a kiss-and-ride facility, a taxi stand, temporary ticketing trailer, platforms, and pedestrian connections, a 0.77-acre urban park, public roadway right-of-way, and a vacant 1.13 acres parcel owned by Montgomery County.

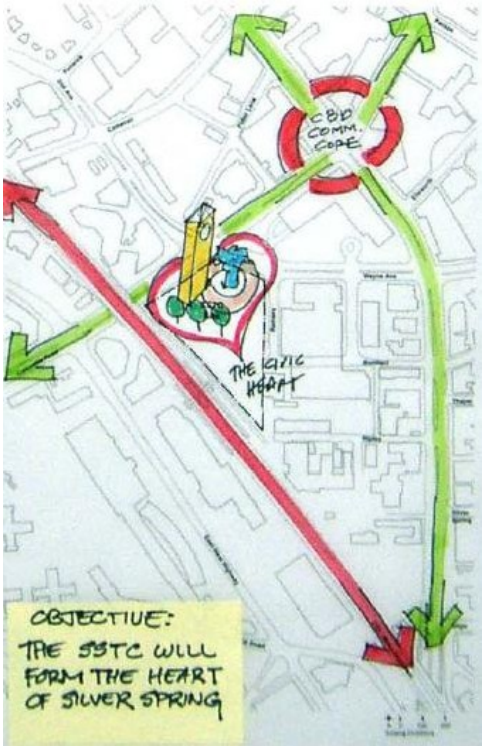
Current land uses surrounding the site include office, moderate- to high-density residential, retail and light industrial developments and several development projects adjacent to the site (within 2,000 feet) are proposed. The project site is zoned CBD-2 which allows a maximum base floor area ratio of 2:1.[1] The intent of the CBD-2 zone is to: (1) provide a density and intensity of development which will permit an appropriate transition from the cores of central business districts to the less dense peripheral areas within and adjacent to the districts; and (2) provide an incentive for the development of residential uses to meet the needs of those employed within the central business districts and those who will be able to use the district transit facilities to travel to and from places of employment.[2]

Potential Effects

The *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* supports the Project as an integral part of the redevelopment of the CBD. The Project will include transit-oriented/joint development including transportation, office, housing, retail, and open space that will retain and enhance the current transportation-related land uses on the site. The *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* recommends retaining the current CBD-2 zoning for the project site. The uses that will be part of the Project are permitted in the CBD-2 zoning category. On March 11, 2004, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved a Zoning Text Amendment to allow additional building height in the CBD-2 zone.

[1] Floor area ratio (FAR) is the ratio of the floor area of a building to the area of the lot on which the building is located.
[2] Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, Section 59-C-6.12. Central Business District Zones.

The Project will not require any land acquisition or displacements.



Consistency with Local Plans

Master Plan Compliance

The *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* guides development in the CBD. The M-NCPPC intends to create a development environment that supports revitalization and focuses high-density, transit-oriented development in the CBD. The *Sector Plan's* land use and development recommendations strive to balance the needs of commuter and local traffic, of walkers and drivers, and to maximize the investment in Silver Spring's transit infrastructure.

The *Sector Plan* specifically supports the development of the Project. While the *Sector Plan* does not describe the Project in detail, it's mix of transit, office, residential, hotel, retail and open space/park uses supports all six themes outlined in the *Sector Plan*:

- A transit-oriented downtown
- A commercial downtown
- A residential downtown
- A civic downtown
- A green downtown
- A pedestrian-friendly downtown

As a transportation hub with the potential for substantial new housing, office, and retail development, Silver Spring is poised to take advantage of the State's commitment to enhanced transit opportunities. The Project's transit-oriented/joint development will encourage people to live, work, shop and entertain themselves in downtown Silver Spring. The Project will allow residents and visitors access to on-site retail, office, hotel and residential uses without the need for an automobile; supply upgraded and additional open space, and provide a new Transit Center and transit-oriented/joint development that integrates into the fabric of downtown Silver Spring.

Priority Places Strategy

Executive Order 01.01.2003.33, Maryland's Priority Places Strategy, signed on October 8, 2003 by Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., builds on three decades of State and local land use policy promoting sustainable development and maintaining Maryland's high quality of life. Specifically, the Executive Order supports the creation of initiatives by the Maryland Department

of Planning to enhance transit-oriented development and community revitalization efforts. The Project supports the economic revitalization occurring in Silver Spring by providing enhanced transportation services and new facilities and is consistent with Maryland's Priority Places Strategy, in which new development is focused in existing built-up areas and contributes to the revitalization and stimulation of investment in older communities.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Socioeconomic Characteristics

General Demographics

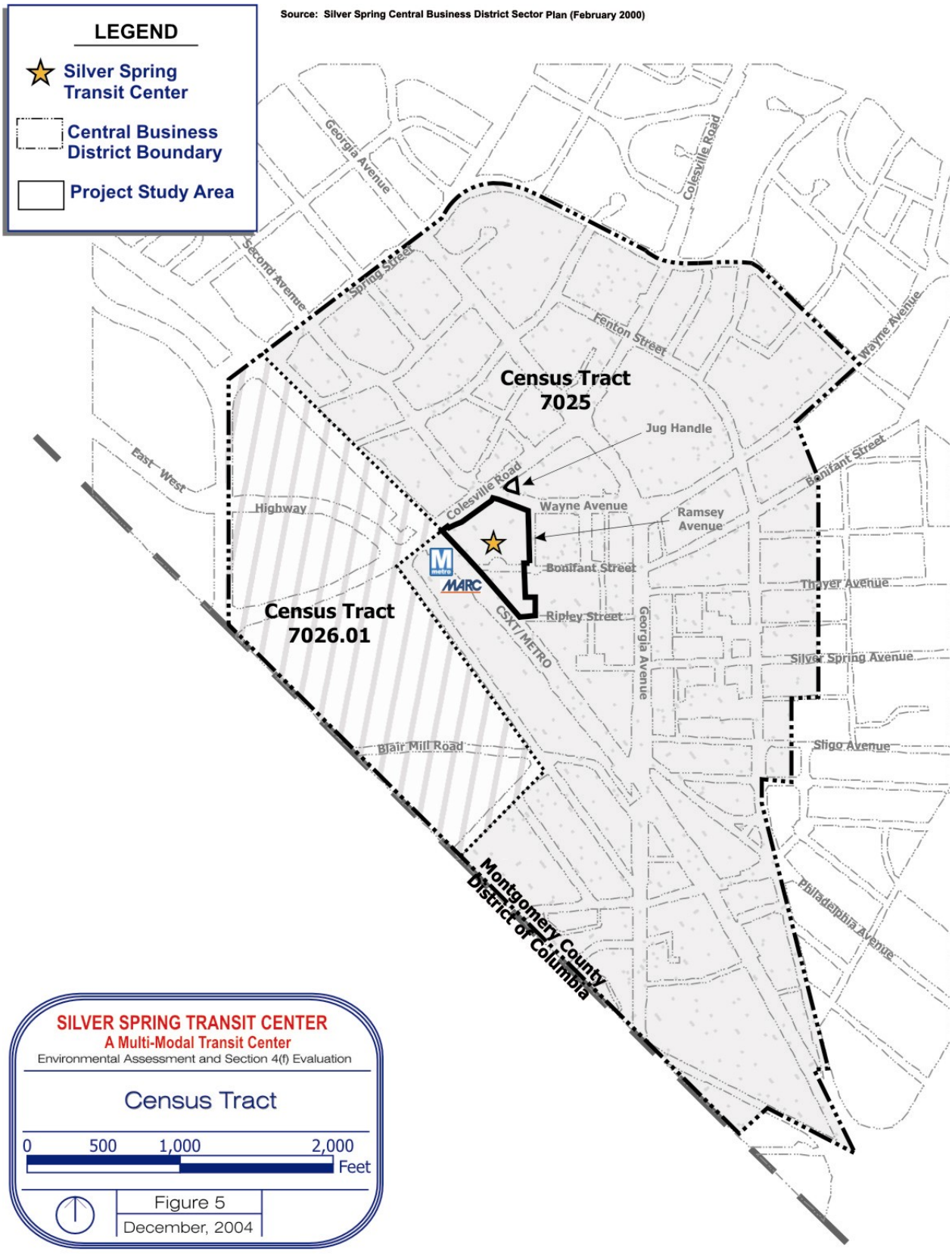
Table 2 presents project area demographic data from the 2000 U.S. Census. The project area includes two census tracts: 7025 and 7026.01 which, together, comprise the Silver Spring CBD (Figure 5). The project site, itself, is in Census Tract 7025.

Table 2: Population, Employment and Household Characteristics

	1990	2000	2010 *Projected*	2020 *Projected*	2030 *Projected*	Percent Change 2000-2030
Population						
Project Area	5,525	6,902	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montgomery County	757,027	873,341	975,000	1,050,000	1,080,000	+25%
Maryland	4,781,468	5,296,486	5,747,050	6,122,925	6,362,100	+20%
Age 65 years or older						
Project Area	1,040	855	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montgomery County	77,491	98,157	127,080	182,080	233,190	+138%
Maryland	517,482	598,503	732,850	1,022,140	1,328,510	+122%
Number of Households						
Project Area	3,190	3,948	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montgomery County	282,228	324,565	370,000	405,000	415,000	+29%
Maryland	1,748,991	1,980,859	2,211,450	2,401,700	2,474,700	+25%
Average Household Size						
Project Area	1.73	1.68	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montgomery County	2.68	2.66	2.60	2.56	2.52	-5%
Maryland	2.67	2.61	2.53	2.48	2.44	-7%
Employment						
Project Area	34,205	30470	38,225	40,950	42,610	+40%
Montgomery County	465,970	545,000	630,000	680,000	705,000	+29%
Maryland	2,760,800	3,110,600	3,484,200	3,638,000	3,709,500	+19%
Disabled*						
Project Area	N/A	7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montgomery County	N/A	13%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maryland	N/A	18%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Sources: *US Census (2000), Maryland Department of Planning, and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Round 6.3 Cooperative Forecasts.*
Notes: *N/A – Not Available*
**Percent of disabled population over age 5.*

Environmental Resources and Determination of Effects



Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*, signed February 11, 1994, requires that Federal agencies identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental affects of its programs, policies and activities on minority and low-income populations resulting from alternatives under consideration and to provide opportunity for participation in the public involvement process.

Baseline demographic data identifies the locations of minority and low-income populations in the project area and in Montgomery County.

Minority Populations

Residents in the surrounding Silver Spring CBD are predominantly African American (48%) and the project area contains a substantially larger percentage of minority populations than either the County or the State, as shown in Table 3. In Census Tract 7025 the percent of the population identifying itself ethnically as Hispanic is higher (17%) than in either Tract 7026.01, the project area, Montgomery County or the State of Maryland.

Table 3: Minority Populations

	Total Population	White	African American	American Indian	Asian Pacific	Other	Total Minority	Percent Minority	Hispanic	Percent Hispanic
Census Tract 7025	2,660	956	1,267	13	140	284	1,704	64%	451	17.0%
Census Tract 7026.01	4,242	1,501	2,064	383	9	281	2,741	65%	292	6.9%
Project Area	6,902	2,457	3,331	26	523	565	4,445	64.5%*	743	12.0%
Montgomery County	829,328	565,917	132,256	2,544	98,651	74,171	307,622	35%	100,604	11.5%
Maryland	5,296,486	3,391,308	1,477,411	15,423	210,929	201,415	1,905,178	36%	227,916	4.3%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census
*Notes: *Average percentage of both census tracts that comprise the project area.*
Data for Maryland are presented for informational purposes, only.

Low-Income Populations

Low-income populations in the project area were greater than the overall low-income population in Montgomery County and in the State as shown in Table 4. Maryland State Highway Administration guidelines recommend comparison of the individual census tracts in the project area with the average percentage of population below the poverty level. The average poverty level for the Silver Spring CBD is 10.3%. While census

tract 7026.01 had an average poverty level of 7.8%, the poverty level in census tract 7025 is 12.8%, greater than the average for the project area as a whole.

Table 4: Low-Income Populations

	Total Population	Low-Income	Percent Low-Income
Census Tract 7025	2,619	335	12.8%
Census Tract 7026.01	4,242	330	7.8%
Project Area	6,861	665	10.3%*
Montgomery County	864,909	47,024	5.4%
Maryland	5,164,376	438,676	8.5%

Source: *2000 U.S. Census*
Notes: *"Low-Income" persons are defined as persons living in households whose annual income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines for the appropriate census year.*
**Average percentage of both census tracts that comprise the project area.*
For informational purposes, only, Year 2000 median household income level for the Silver Spring CBD was $40,313 and $71,551 for Montgomery County.
Data for Maryland are presented for informational purposes, only.

Potential Effects

The Project is located in an area with proportionately higher percentages of minority populations and low-income populations compared with the County; however, any impacts will be of a beneficial nature. The Project is not expected to require displacements or have adverse community impacts. The Project will consolidate transportation facilities in a single location and facilitate access to social and transportation services for persons in the project area, the County and the region. Residents, employees, and visitors to the Silver Spring CBD will benefit from improved transit facilities, improved traffic circulation, easier access, increased pedestrian safety and mobility, and increased housing, employment and retail opportunities.

Mitigation Measures

The MTA and Montgomery County consider public input into future transit investments and, in compliance with Executive Order 12898, will provide an opportunity for minority and low-income populations to participate in the public involvement process.

Public involvement for the Project dates back to the late 1990's, when the project involved only the transit center. Community meetings and public hearings have been held since January 2000. The local representatives and residents have been very supportive of the Project.

Neighborhoods and Community Facilities

Capital Crescent Trail

Existing Conditions

The project site does not contain neighborhoods or residential housing of any type. However, the surrounding Silver Spring CBD contains residential development (apartments and townhouses) interspersed with commercial areas. Figure 6 shows the locations of existing and potential housing sites within 2,000 feet of the project site. Figure 7 shows the locations of existing and proposed community facilities. While there are no schools, libraries, or hospitals within the Silver Spring CBD, community facilities within 2,000 feet of the project site include three post offices, a fire-rescue facility, a police department, a District Court building, and a social services agency. Metro Urban Park is located on the project site. Figure 8 shows the locations of the following planned and recently completed improvements in Silver Spring.

SILVER SPRING CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Future Projects – Green

1. Park & Planning Site – Office, Residential
2. Easter Seals
3. BioTech Renovation and New Construction
4. Retail Conversion
5. Residential – Condominiums
6. Transit Center/Office /Hotel/Apartment
7. Civic Building and Veterans Plaza
8. Redevelopment Project – Residential
9. Silver Spring Library – New Construction
10. 8408 Georgia Ave – Renovation
11. Addition – Art Studio and Self Storage
12. Montgomery College (Giant Bakery) – Arts Dept.
13. Montgomery College Cultural Performance Center

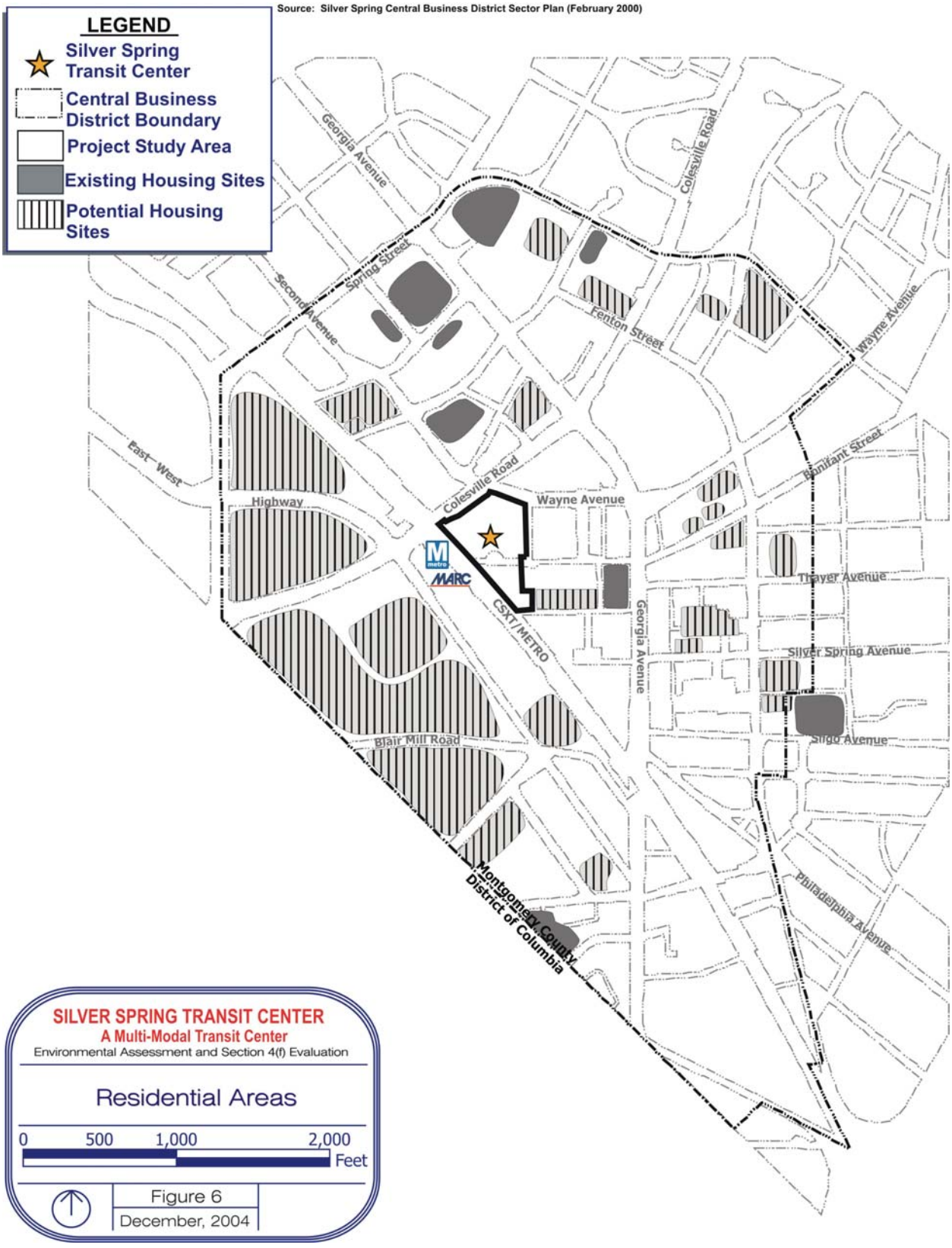
Projects In Progress – Pink

1. BioTech – New Construction
2. District Court – New Construction
3. Montgomery Arms – Renovation
4. City Place Mall – Renovation
5. Condominium – New Construction – 14 stories
6. Office – Renovation
7. Loft Condominium – New Construction
8. Storefront Conversion to Restaurant
9. Office – Renovation
10. 8228 Georgia Ave – ALC Hqtrs – Renovation/ Addition
11. Fire/Police Station – New Construction
12. Residential, Retail – New Construction
13. Restaurant/Art Studio – Renovation
14. Residential, Condominium – New Construction
15. Office to Residential Conversion – CoHousing
16. Residential – New Construction/Office Conversion
17. Retail – Renovation
18. Montgomergy College Student Services Center

Completed Projects – Orange

1. 1100 Spring St Renovation – United Therapeutics
2. Holiday Inn – Renovation
3. 8757 Georgia Av Renovation – Social & Sci. Sys.
4. Georgian Towers – Renovation
5. Residential Conversion to Office
6. Charter House – Renovation
7. 8730 Georgia Ave – Renovation
8. 8701 Georgia Ave – Zalco Building – Renovation
9. 8605 Cameron Street – Guardian Building – Renovation
10. 8727 Colesville Road – Hilton Hotel – Renovation
11. 801 Roeder Road – Renovation
12. AFI Silver Theatre / Round House Theatre – Historic Restoration and New Construction
13. Redevelopment Project – Restaurants/Retail
14. Chevy Chase Bank – New Construction
15. Historic Tastee Diner – Relocation and Expansion
16. Residential Townhomes – New Construction
17. Cubanos Restaurant – Renovation
18. Cameron Hill Park – New Construction
19. McDonald's Restaurant – New Construction
20. Metro Center Plaza – Renovation
21. Kinkos/Rite Aid/Starbucks/Einstein – New Construction
22. Discovery Communications World Hqtrs – New Construction
23. Redevelopment Project – New Construction
24. AURAS Building – Renovation
25. Ecology Mart – Renovation
26. The Blairs – Residential – New Construction
27. The Blairs – Commercial – Renovation
28. Pyramid Atlantic – Arts Group Renovation
29. Restaurant – Renovation
30. 8120-8200 Georgia Ave – Renovation for Shops
31. Rental Apartments – 14 story – New Construction
32. Archer Building – Renovation
33. NORA School – New Construction
34. Greyhound Bus Depot – Renovation
35. Animal Hospital – New Construction
36. Historic B&O Train Station – Restoration
37. Jesus House – New Construction
38. Silver Spring Innovation Center – New Construction
39. ACECO Headquarters – Renovation
40. Blair Mill Arts Center – Renovation/New Construction
41. Discovery (DCTC) – Renovation
42. Rental Apartments – 15 Story Office Conversion
43. Branch Bank – Renovation
44. Seven Eleven – New Construction
45. Montgomery College Expansion – Health Sciences Building – New Construction

Environmental Resources and Determination of Effects



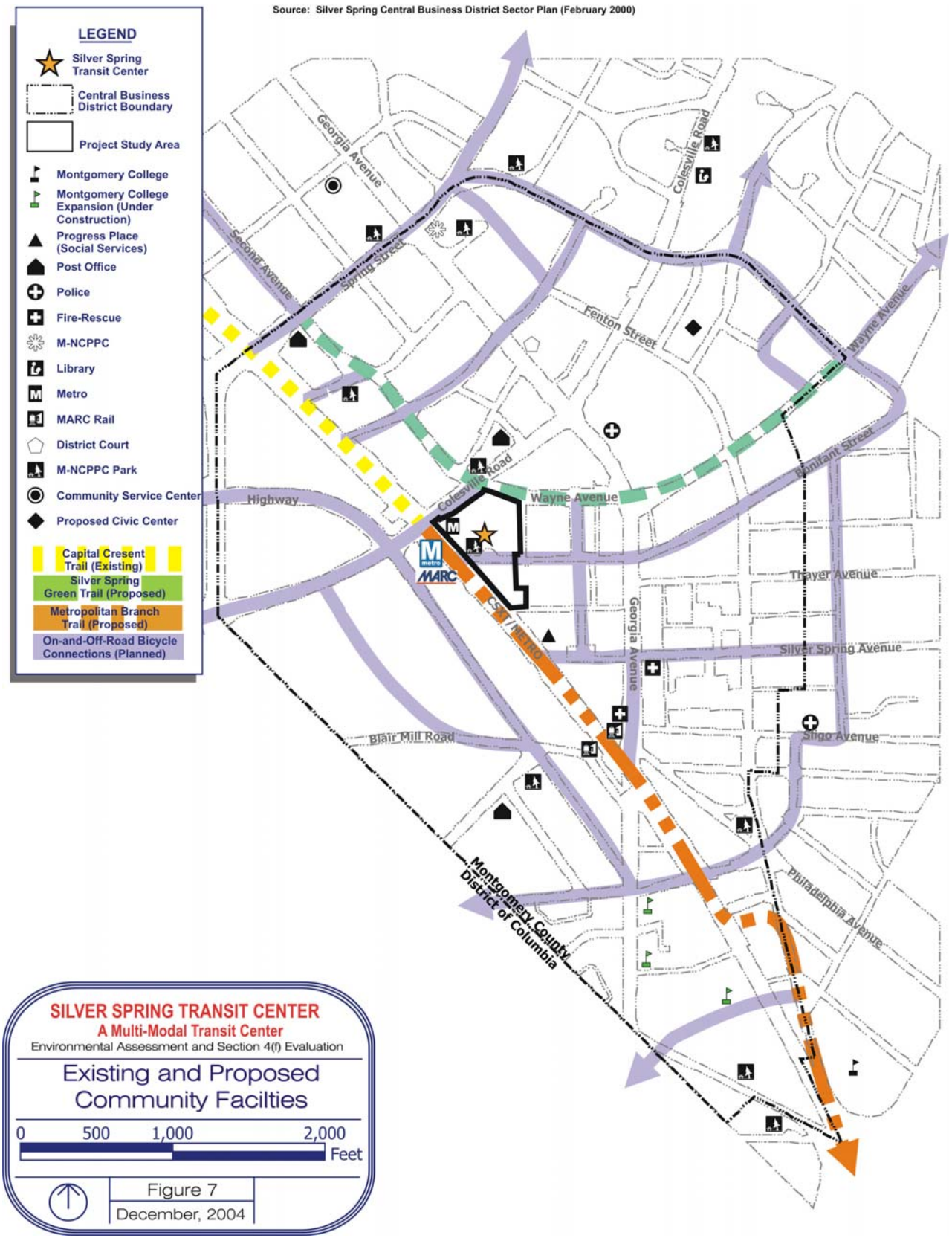

Source: Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan (February 2000)
LEGEND
Silver Spring Transit Center
Central Business District Boundary
Project Study Area
Montgomery College
Montgomery College Expansion (Under Construction)
Progress Place (Social Services)
Post Office
Police
Fire-Rescue
M-NCPPC
Library
Metro
MARC Rail
District Court
M-NCPPC Park
Community Service Center
Proposed Civic Center
Capital Cresent Trail (Existing)
Silver Spring Green Trail (Proposed)
Metropolitan Branch Trail (Proposed)
On-and-Off-Road Bicycle Connections (Planned)
Georgia Avenue
Colesville Road
Second Avenue
Spring Street
Fenton Street
Wayne Avenue
Highway
Ramlant Street
Thayer Avenue
Silver Spring Avenue
Blair Mill Road
Sligo Avenue
Philadelphia Avenue
CSX / METRO
MARC
Montgomery County
District of Columbia
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Existing and Proposed Community Facilties
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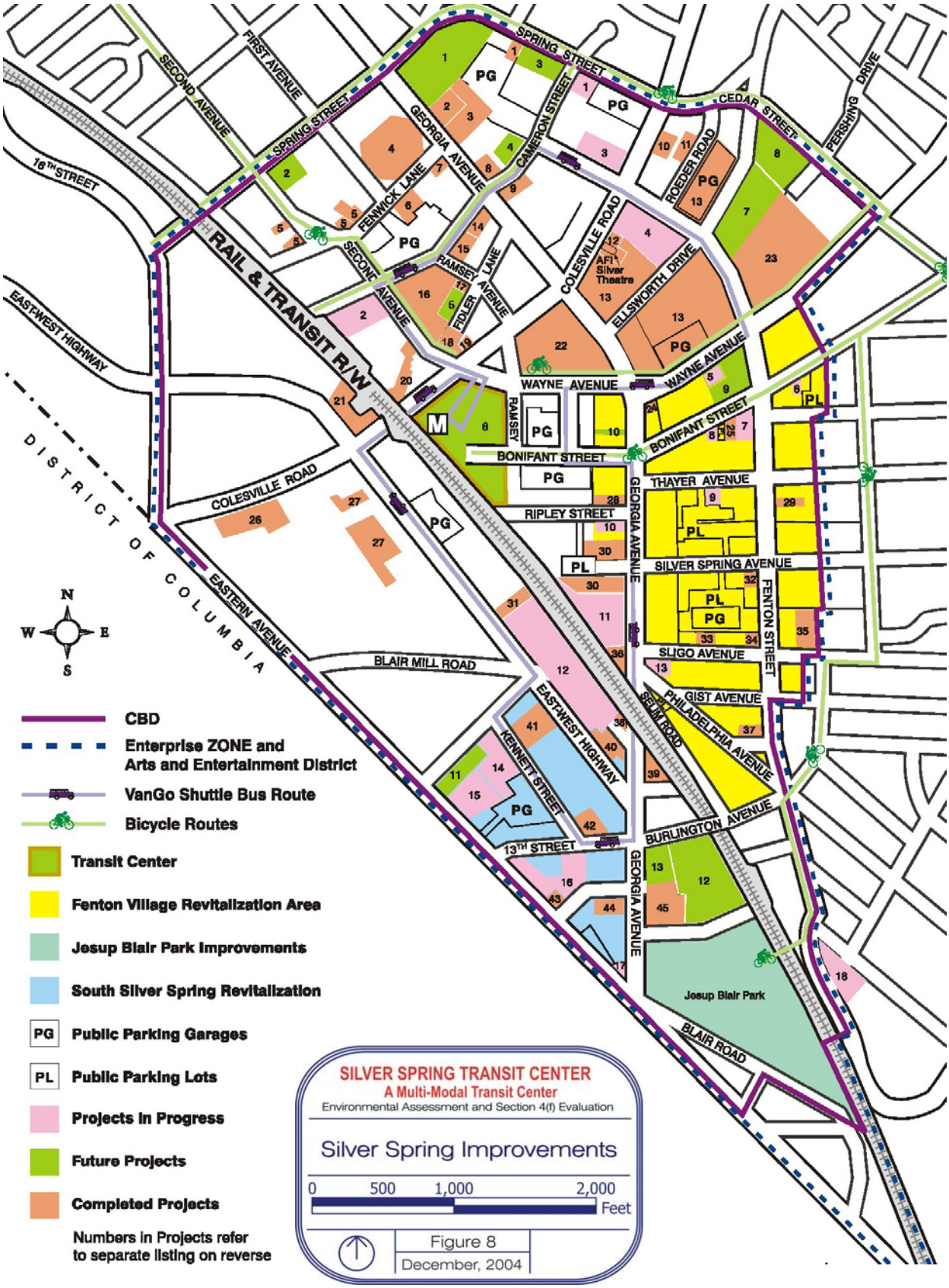
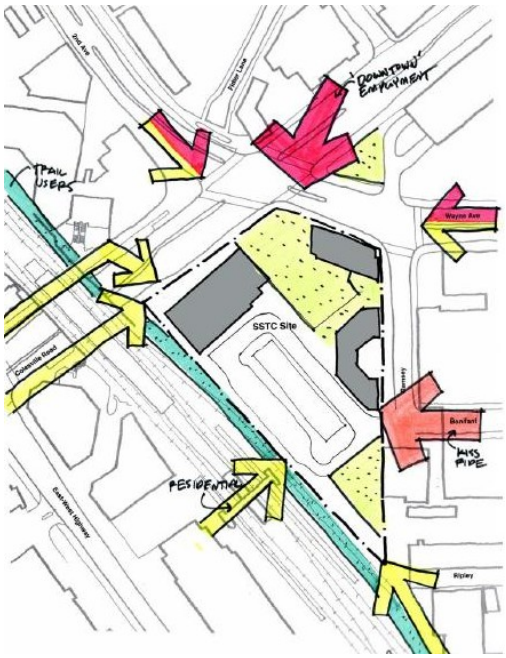
Figure 7
December, 2004

Environmental Resources and Determination of Effects





Circulation Patterns

Visual and Aesthetic Quality

The Silver Spring CBD is a highly urbanized area and the site, itself, currently contains no buildings but it is surrounded by high-rise development. The plans for the project site are in keeping with the urban character of the Silver Spring CBD. The Project has been carefully designed to enhance the surroundings of the project area while serving its major function as a safe and convenient transit center. Street level retail will contribute to creating an attractive, welcoming public space. The urban plaza and park will be the focus of pedestrian activity. Care has been taken to locate the buildings on the site so as to maximize the amount of sunlight in the urban plaza and park.

Potential Effects

The Project will be a visual and aesthetic asset to the Silver Spring CBD. The Project will not separate neighborhoods, disrupt community cohesion, or affect the provision of fire, police, health care, or social services in the long-term. However, short-term construction effects are expected (refer to the "Construction and Utilities" section of this document). Improved access and mobility through the site will be provided by pedestrian access points at multiple levels and minimized pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. Residents and patrons to downtown Silver Spring will benefit from consolidated transportation services, which will increase accessibility of transportation facilities and new amenities that will support the revitalization of the CBD. The Project will include pedestrian promenades, bicycle access, connections to existing and proposed trail systems, landscape elements and new park amenities that will encourage increased use of transit and reduce the reliance on automobile travel.

The Project will displace the existing Metro Urban Park to a new location on the project site. Refer to the Section 4(f) Evaluation in this document for more detailed descriptions of potential effects and mitigation measures for Metro Urban Park.

Mitigation Measures

The Project will accommodate connections to existing and future recreational trails. Plans for the replacement park are being developed in close coordination with WMATA, MTA, Montgomery County, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The replacement park will be the same size as the existing Metro Urban Park (0.77 acres) and serve similar functions. Currently, Metro Urban Park provides a place for transit patrons to gather and wait for transit connections.

Refer to the Section 4(f) Evaluation for more detailed descriptions of the potential effects and mitigation measures for Metro Urban Park.

Title VI Statement

Montgomery County's Human Rights Law, administered by the Office of Human Rights fosters equal opportunity for all without regard to race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, marital status, age, disability, presence of children, source of income, sexual orientation, or genetic status and strictly in accord with their individual merits as human beings. Alleged discriminatory actions should be addressed to the Office of Human Rights, at the following address, for investigation:

Montgomery County
Office of Human Rights
110 North Washington Street, Suite 200
Rockville, Maryland 20850

It is the policy of the MTA to ensure compliance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and related civil rights laws and regulations which prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, physical or mental handicap or sexual orientation in all MTA programs and projects funded in whole or in part by the Federal Transit Administration. The MTA will not discriminate in transit planning, design, construction, the acquisition of right-of-way, or the provision of relocation advisory assistance. This policy has been incorporated into all levels of the transportation planning process in order that proper consideration may be given to the social, economic and environmental effects of all transportation projects. Alleged discriminatory actions should be addressed to the Office of Equal Opportunity of the MTA, at the following address, for investigation:

Office of Equal Opportunity
Maryland Transit Administration
6 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Existing Conditions

Historic Resources

Due to its importance in the historic development of Montgomery County, the Silver Spring CBD contains a number of historic structures that have been formally listed on Federal, State or Local historic property inventories (National Register of

Historic Places (NHRP)), Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), and the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation (Master Plan). These historic resources include individual structures, historic building complexes and historic districts including multiple properties. No historic structures are located on the project site or will be impacted by the Project.

Figure 9 shows the results of a 2002 survey, which identified all previously documented archaeological sites and historic properties, and evaluated other potential sites and properties, within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Project.[3]

The specific APE for this project has a number of distinct elements: 1) the potential direct impact to archaeological resources which may lie within the actual construction Limits of Disturbance (LOD), and 2) the potential direct/indirect impacts to historic properties and districts resulting from the development of new facilities (which can extend beyond the footprint of the new facility out to the immediate view shed and/or potential noise impact area).

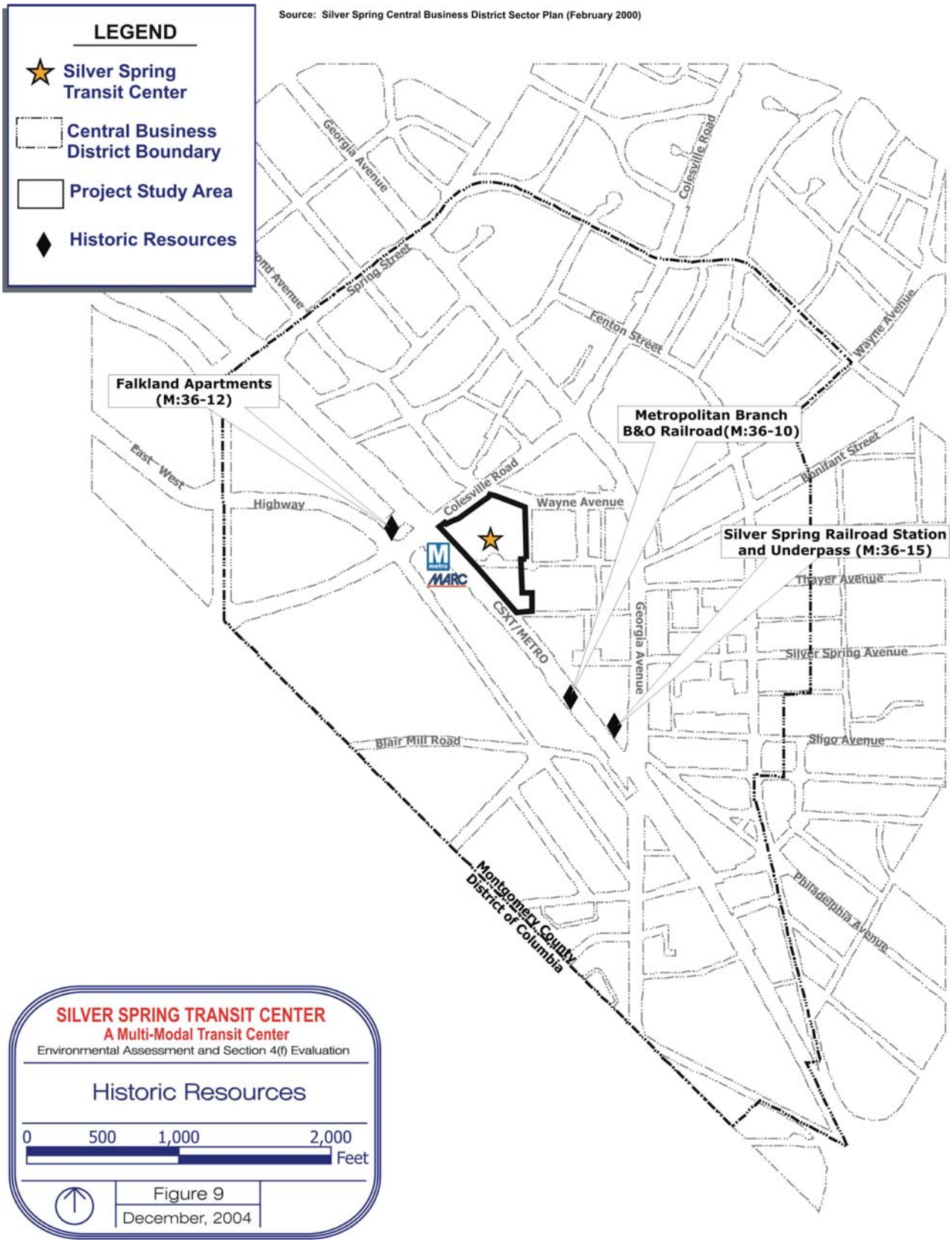
The 2002 survey presented formal Determinations of Eligibility for a number of previously unrecorded resources and received concurrence from the Maryland Historic Trust (letter dated January 8, 2003).

Archaeological Resources

There are no previously identified archaeological sites within the LOD for the proposed Transit Center. There appears to have been only one archaeological assessment in the vicinity of the Project, a WMATA evaluation of the existing CSXT rail corridor. The report concluded that the portion of the rail alignment in the vicinity of Silver Spring had a low potential for intact archeological sites (Gardner 1976, pp. 4-5).

In general terms, the historic archaeological potential of the project area would appear to be low. The historic use of the block adjacent to the B&O Railroad, does not appear to have pre-dated 1931, and then was limited to the Ramsey Avenue frontage. The remainder of the block saw commercial development between 1950-70; however, the entire block was then razed, graded, paved and landscaped, effectively disturbing any earlier sub-surface archaeological remains that may have existed.

[3] *Survey Findings – Architectural/Historical and Archaeological Resources on the Proposed Purple Line Project, Bethesda to Silver Spring Segment, Montgomery County, Maryland*. Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2002.


LEGEND
Silver Spring Transit Center
Central Business District Boundary
Project Study Area
Historic Resources
Source: Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan (February 2000)
Georgia Avenue
Colesville Road
Spring Street
Fenton Street
Wayne Avenue
Falkland Apartments (M:36-12)
Metropolitan Branch B&O Railroad(M:36-10)
East West Highway
Colesville Road
Wayne Avenue
Bonifant Street
Silver Spring Railroad Station and Underpass (M:36-15)
Thayer Avenue
CSXT/METRO
Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring Avenue
Blair Mill Road
Sligo Avenue
Montgomery County
District of Columbia
Philadelphia Avenue
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Historic Resources
0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet
Figure 9
December, 2004

Potential Effects

The three historic resources identified within the Project's APE are described below, along with a discussion of potential effects (pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966).

- Metropolitan Branch - B&O Railroad (M: 37-10)
- Falkland Apartments (M: 36-12)
- Silver Spring Railroad Station and Underpass (M: 36-15)

Metropolitan Branch - B&O Railroad (M: 37-10)

The Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad, the principal rail route from Washington going west, was originally constructed between 1866 and 1873 and has been continuously upgraded. Now owned and operated by CSXT Railroad, this resource has been determined eligible for the NRHP for its historical significance in the transportation industry and for its key role in the agricultural and residential development of Montgomery County.

The proposed Transit Center development represents another chapter in the continued development of the rail corridor. The proposed development will require minor modifications to the portion of the rail alignment directly adjacent to the Transit Center. As a result, the proposed Transit Center would have "No Effect" on the historic fabric or historic character of the NRHP resource.

Falkland Apartments (M: 36 -12)

Falkland Apartments

This garden apartment development located at 16th Street and East-West Highway in Silver Spring was constructed between 1936 and 1938. The Falkland Apartments was one of the first projects funded by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and embodies design elements that stemmed from the "garden city" movement. The apartment complex has been determined eligible for the NRHP for its historic significance as one of the earliest FHA projects and its architectural significance as an example of an apartment that embodies the distinct characteristics of the garden style.

The CSXT railroad corridor forms the eastern boundary of the Falkland Complex historic property. Although the Transit Center is approximately 500 feet east of the closest point of Falkland Apartments boundary, with the exception of fencing, there are no intervening structures or landscape features. As a result, the Falkland Apartments have been determined to fall within the Project's APE. However, given the substantial

physical separation, and the heavy prior urban development of the project site, the Transit Center development will have no direct or indirect impact on the architectural character of the historic Falkland Apartments complex. As a result, a finding of "No Effect" is appropriate.

Silver Spring Railroad Station and Underpass (M: 36-15)

The Silver Spring Railroad Station and Underpass is located on Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring, Montgomery County. The brick main station is connected to a smaller passenger shelter on the west side of the tracks by a pedestrian underpass tunnel. The existing station is a 1945 replacement of the original 1878 B&O Railroad Station, and its construction signaled Silver Spring's prominence as a mid-20th century commercial center. The station has undergone recent renovations and is now open to the public. It is planned to house a visitor center/museum related to the proposed Metropolitan Branch Hiker/Biker Trail.

Silver Spring Railroad Station

The Silver Spring Railroad Station complex and proposed Transit Center both reside on the east side of the CSXT railroad corridor. Despite the lack of intervening structures, given the relative orientation and physical separation (1,350 feet) between the historic complex and the proposed transit station, there will be no direct visual or noise impact. The proposed project would not involve a physical use from the Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station and would have no effect under Section 106 to the complex. The complex is historically associated with the railroad and the main station would continue in a transportation-related use adjacent to the railroad. As a result, the Transit Center project would have "No Effect" on the original features or historic character of the train facility complex.

Mitigation Measures

A cultural resources technical report was prepared pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA and submitted to the Maryland Historical Trust for concurrence.[4] The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has concurred that there are no adverse effects to National Register-listed or eligible historic properties or archaeological resources due to the Project. The "Comments and Coordination" section of this document contains a copy of the SHPO's correspondence that indicates concurrence with a no effect determination to historic or archaeological resources by the Project.

[4] *Architectural/Historical and Archaeological Resources Related to the Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center, Montgomery County, Maryland,* Parsons Brinckerhoff, April 2004.

Environmental Resources and Determination of Effects

Natural Environment

Existing Conditions

Water Resources

The project site contains no wetlands or Waters of the U.S; is not within a FEMA designated 100-year floodplain; is not in, or near, a navigable waterway, nor is it in a Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) uses surface water to supply water in the project area. Due to the limited well-water supply available, groundwater does not represent a major potable water source in the project area. However, the *Geotechnical Report* (January 2001) noted groundwater was observed at boring depths of 10.5 to 39.5 feet.[5]

Wildlife and Habitat

The project site supports wildlife (birds and squirrels) that is tolerant of a highly developed urban environment. The majority of the surveyed trees have been planted by WMATA around the perimeter and on the various islands and medians within the site. An area of approximately 5,300 square feet exists between the Metro Urban Park and the railroad right-of-way, which contains a fenced landscaped tree area. These trees have a close on-center spacing that creates a shaded area.

Typical Tree Plantings

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

Rare, threatened, and endangered species are regulated at both the Federal and State level under the Endangered Species Act and the Maryland Non-game and Endangered Species Act, respectively. Coordination with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife and Heritage Division, Fisheries Service, and Natural Heritage Service, and the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service indicates that there are no State or Federally listed rare, threatened, or endangered species within 1,500 feet of the project site. The "Comments and Coordination" section of this document contains relevant correspondence from these agencies.

Geology, Soils and Topology

The project area is located within the eastern portion of the Piedmont physiographic region of Maryland. This geological province is underlain by a complex series of metamorphosed rocks, including gneiss, schist, marble, serpentine, and granitic

[5] *Geotechnical Report for the Silver Spring Transit Center*, EBA Engineering, Inc., January 2001.

and gabbroic rocks. The *Soil Survey of Montgomery County* (1989) classifies the project area as "urban land" – more than 75% of the surface is covered by asphalt, concrete, buildings or other structures. Soils are of the Glenelg series that are described as fine-loamy, mixed, mesic Typic Hapludults, very deep and well-drained. The *Geotechnical Report* (January 2001) indicates that rock (decomposed rock and bedrock) was encountered at depths less than 10 feet on the project site.[6] The *Geotechnical Report* also indicates that the ground surface descends to the northwest with elevations ranging from approximately 346 to 306.

Potential Effects

The Project is not expected to affect wetlands, floodplains, surface or ground water quality, but will affect stormwater quantity and quality as a result of a slight increase in impervious surface areas.

Since the existing site contains a transportation facility, minimal effects are expected to wildlife. The mammals and birds currently using the project area as habitat would most likely relocate to undisturbed areas during construction and re-inhabit the areas immediately following construction.

Since the Project disturbs more than 40,000 square feet of soil, a grading permit or sediment control plan is required, as well as a Forest Stand Delineation (FSD) and Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) under the Forest Conservation Act of 1991 (FCA).

The FSD is a general survey of the type and quality of the existing forests within the Project's right-of-way. The FCP is submitted after approval of the FSD and describes forest effects, conservation practices to be used, hectares (acres) of mitigation required, and detailed mitigation plans. Coordination meetings will be conducted to determine the specifics of aforestation required for the site.

Typical Tree Plantings

No water quality treatment facilities currently exist on site. A slight increase in impervious surface areas may occur, depending upon the final layout for the Project. An existing water quantity detention facility exists on-site. The existing underground vault will be removed and water quantity treatment will be provided elsewhere on-site. Water quantity requirements for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) will be met by providing on-site underground water quantity treatment facilities.

[6] *Geotechnical Report for the Silver Spring Transit Center*, EBA Engineering, Inc., January 2001.

Mitigation Measures

A Forest Stand Delineation (FSD) and a Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) will be submitted to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Forestry Division for approval.

The project site will include water quality treatment as required by the MCDPS and MDE. Water quality treatment facilities will be designed to treat 100% of the redeveloped impervious cover for the site. Drainage from the underground parking facilities and other below ground areas will discharge into the WSSC sanitary sewers and oil/water separators will be designed as required by WSSC.

The Project will submit a Stormwater Management Concept Plan to MCDPS for approval. Following approval, the Project will apply to MCDPS for a Sediment Control permit. Erosion and sediment control will be provided on-site to meet MCDPS, MDE, and M-NCPPC requirements.

The inspection and testing of all earthwork and foundation construction, by a company experienced in similar work, will be performed during subsequent phases of the Project.

Hazardous Materials

The site is owned partly by Montgomery County and WMATA. When Montgomery County purchased the five parcels in 1990, hazardous materials were found within the previously existing structures, including Asbestos Containing Building Materials (ACBM), a variety of containers and drums of oil, antifreeze, and painting products.[7] A licensed disposal facility has removed the hazardous materials. Four underground storage tanks (one waste oil tank and three gasoline tanks) were also removed from the parcels. The MDE approved a remediation plan on February 21, 1995 to perform various soil and monitoring well sampling.

There is no documentation of hazardous materials existing on the parcel owned by WMATA.

Air Quality

Guidelines and Criteria

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) and the Final Conformity Rule (40 CFR Parts 51 and 93) direct the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement

[7] *Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Silver Spring Transit Center*, JMT, Inc., July 2000.

environmental policies and regulations that will ensure acceptable levels of air quality. Under the authority of the CAAA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a set of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) that define allowable limits for atmospheric concentrations of air pollutants. Areas not in compliance with NAAQS are classified as non-attainment areas. Areas that have inadequate data to classify are treated as attainment areas until proven otherwise. Areas that were designated as non-attainment when the CAAA were implemented but have since attained compliance with the standards are classified as "maintenance areas". The designation of an area is made on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis.

Existing Conditions

On January 3, 2001, the EPA finalized its approval of the DC-MD-VA Revised Phase II Attainment Plan. EPA also approved the extension of the 1-hour attainment date to 2005. In April 2004, Montgomery County was classified as a moderate nonattainment area for O_3 (8-hour standard). Montgomery County is classified as in attainment for PM_{10}, Pb and NO_2.

The Air and Radiation Management Administration (ARMA), within the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has an extensive monitoring network. The nearest CO and PM_{10} monitor is located in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Methodology

The *Air Quality Technical Memorandum* (Parsons Brinckerhoff, May 2004) contains a full description of the methodology and results of the analysis.

Site Selection / Receptor Locations

CO levels were estimated at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road using the CAL3QHC (version 2) model. This analysis site was selected through a screening methodology based on intersection volumes, Levels-of-Service (LOS) and project-induced changes in traffic conditions. Nineteen intersections were screened. Of the 19 intersections, three intersections (Georgia Avenue/Colesville Road, Georgia Avenue/Wayne Avenue and Wayne Avenue/Fenton Street) failed the screening either because the LOS decreased in one of the build scenarios as compared to the No-Build scenario or the volume increased (along with a LOS below D) in the Build scenarios as compared to the No-Build scenario. The highest volume intersection of the three failing sites, Georgia Avenue/Colesville Road, was chosen for analysis. Receptors were chosen at each site in accordance with the guidelines

found in EPA's *Guideline for Modeling Carbon Monoxide from Roadway Intersections* (EPA-454/R-92-005) and with respect to the unique geometry of each analysis site.

Potential Effects

Table 5 and Table 6 show the maximum 1-hour and 8-hour CO levels predicted at the Georgia Avenue/Colesville Road intersection. Future CO levels are predicted to be lower than existing CO levels. This is due to mandated requirements for fuels and vehicular technology directed at reducing vehicular emissions. Future Build and No-Build CO levels are predicted to be very similar, with a slight increase in the 2006 PM peak hour Build concentrations as compared to the 2006 PM peak hour No-Build concentrations. All predicted concentrations are below the applicable 1-hour Federal and State CO standard of 35 ppm and 8-hour Federal and State CO standard of 9 ppm; therefore, the Project is not predicted to cause or exacerbate a violation of the applicable NAAQS.

Table 5: Maximum Predicted AM and PM Peak 1-Hour CO Concentrations (ppm)

Site #	Location	Existing		No-Build 2006		Build 2006		No-Build 2025		Build 2025	
		AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
1	Georgia Avenue/Colesville Road	7.1	8.2	6.6	7.6	6.6	7.8	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2

Notes: Predicted Levels include a background of 4.4 ppm. One-hour Federal and State CO standard = 35 ppm.

Table 6: Maximum Predicted 8-Hour CO Concentrations (ppm)

Site #	Location	Existing	No-Build 2006	Build 2006	No-Build 2025	Build 2025
1	Georgia Avenue/Colesville Road	5.6	5.1	5.3	3.5	3.5

Notes: Predicted Levels include a background of 2.9 ppm. Eight-hour Federal and State CO standard = 9 ppm.

At this time, it is unclear where ventilation shafts for the underground parking would be placed. Once this information is available, an air quality analysis will be conducted at these vent locations to ensure that the Project conforms to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Construction related effects of the Project would be limited to short-term increased fugitive dust and mobile source emissions during construction.

Mitigation Measures

Fugitive Dust

The State Highway Administration has established "Specifications for Construction and Materials" which identifies a procedure to be followed by contractors involved in site work. During the construction period all appropriate measures (*Code of Maryland Regulations* 10.18.06.03 D) would be incorporated

to minimize the air quality impacts of the proposed project. The following preventative and mitigative measures should be taken to minimize the possible particulate pollution problem:

Site Preparation

- Minimize land disturbance;
- Use watering trucks to minimize dust;
- Cover trucks when hauling dirt;
- Stabilize the surface of dirt piles if not removed immediately;
- Use windbreaks to prevent any accidental dust pollution;
- Limit vehicular paths and stabilize these temporary roads; and
- Pave all unpaved construction roads and parking areas to road grade for a length no less than 50 feet where such roads and parking areas exit the construction site to prevent dirt from washing onto paved roadways.

Construction

- Cover trucks when transferring materials;
- Use dust suppressants on non-paved traveled paths;
- Minimize unnecessary vehicular and machinery activities; and
- Minimize dirt track-out by washing or cleaning trucks before leaving the construction site (alternative to this strategy is to pave a few hundred feet of the exit road, just before entering the public road).

Post Construction

- Revegetate any disturbed land not used
- Remove unused material
- Remove dirt piles
- Revegetate all vehicular paths created during construction to avoid future off-road vehicular activities.

Mobile Source Emissions

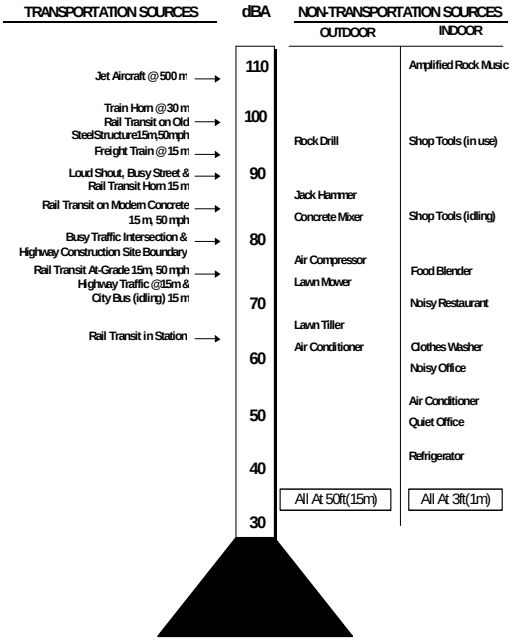
Since emissions of CO from motor vehicles increase with decreasing vehicle speed, disruption of traffic during construction (such as the temporary reduction of roadway capacity and the increased queue lengths) could result in short-term elevated concentrations of CO. In order to minimize the amount of emissions generated, every effort should be made

during the construction phase to limit disruption to traffic, especially during peak travel periods.

Noise and Vibration

Guidelines and Criteria

Utilizing the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) "general assessment" procedures the existing noise conditions in the project area have been assessed to provide the potential noise impacts from the proposed development of the Project. Cumulative future project-generated noise levels at the sensitive receptors in the site from noise sources operating within the site have been predicted by adding noise from project-related noise sources, which include buses traveling to and from the proposed bus loop within the Transit Center, buses idling at the bus loop and trains idling on the CSXT/METRO railroad tracks. The assessment was performed in conformance with procedures contained in the FTA Manual entitled *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*, (DOT-T-95-16).



Sources: FTA Report DOT-T-95-16. "Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment: Final Report", April 1995
Hudson River Waterfront Transportation Corridor DEIS, November 1992

Existing Conditions

Existing noise levels in the project area were measured during October 6-8, 2004. Results show that existing noise in the project area is largely due to vehicular traffic (including buses) on Colesville Road, Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Avenue and train movements on the CSXT/METRO tracks located west of the project site.

Table 7 and Figure 10 present nearest sensitive receptors within the proposed development and along the bus routes to/from the bus loop. Existing noise measurements are shown in the figure as one-hour L_{eq} noise levels at the sensitive sites. Results of the monitoring indicate that noise levels due to existing noise sources at receptors in the project area are in the range of 69 to 78 dBA. Review agencies specify that acceptable daytime outdoor noise level for residential land uses and hotels is an hourly L_{eq} of 65 dBA, which is exceeded at all three monitored sites. Currently, there are no residential communities directly adjacent to the project site. The closest residents are along Second Avenue approximately 150 feet northeast of the corner of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue.

Table 7: Existing Monitored Hourly Leq Noise Levels (2004)

Site #	Location	Land Use Description	FTA Land Use Category	Existing Peak hour L_{eq}
1	Colesville Road at Wayne Avenue/ Second Street	Proposed Office Building	3	78
2	Wayne Avenue between Ramsey Avenue and Bus Loop	Proposed Hotel	2	70
3	Ramsey Avenue south of Wayne Avenue	Proposed Residential	2	69

Methodology

The *Noise Quality Technical Memorandum* (Parsons Brinckerhoff, November 2004) contains a full description of the methodology and results of the analysis.

Potential Effects

Vehicles traveling on Colesville Road, Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Avenue contribute to existing and future noise levels. Noise from activities associated with the lower level of the bus loop would generally be confined within the enclosed facility. Noise from buses idling at the upper level of the bus loop are expected to reach the nearest residential and hotel receptors mainly during the daytime hours. Although the number of buses accessing the facility between 6:00 AM and 7:00 AM (this one hour falls within the FTA defined nighttime period of 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM) is almost 60% of the peak hourly daytime number, this would not substantially alter the results of the impact analysis as only a very few buses access the facility during the remaining critical nighttime hours between 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM. CSXT Main Line trains idle in the vicinity of the proposed office building and their noise levels are very much less than the measured existing noise levels at this site.

Table 8 estimates existing and predicted future project-related L_{eq} noise levels at the residential and hotel sites (1 through 5), and at the office site (6 and 7). Of the seven sensitive receptor locations analyzed, four are predicted to experience no noise impacts from project-related noise. The remaining three sites are discussed below.

Road traffic noise levels at Site 2 would not exceed the FHWA noise abatement criterion of 66 dBA for this land use since buses accessing the terminal are expected to generate an hourly L_{eq} of 62 dBA at this site, which is less than the FHWA criterion. The increase in the total future noise level (71 dBA) over the existing noise level (70 dBA) is 1 dBA, which would be an imperceptible change to residents of the area.


LEGEND
Noise Assessment Receptors
Measured Existing Noise Levels-dBA (2004)
78
Wayne Avenue
Colesville Road
1
Hotel
70
2
Proposed Public Park
7
Office
3
4
6
Residential
Ramsey Avenue
Transit Center
5
69
CSXT/METRO
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Noise Assessment Receptors
Drawing Not to Scale
Figure 10
December, 2004

Table 8: Noise Impact Assessment

Receptor Number	Location	Existing Land Use / Future Land Use	Noise Sources	Distance to Source (Feet)	Project Noise Levels (Total)	Existing Noise Levels (2004)	Existing Noise Plus Total Project Noise Levels (Cumulative)	Cumulative Minus Existing Noise Levels	Impact Based on FTA Criteria (Yes/No)
1	North Side of Hotel Facing Wayne Avenue	Wayne Avenue / Hotel	Mobile Buses Mobile Autos Idling Buses Idling Trains	60 60 NA NA	56 51 -- -- (57)	78	78	0	No
2	South Side of Hotel Facing Upper Bus Loop	Bus Facility / Hotel	Mobile Buses Mobile Autos Idling Buses Idling Trains	NA 170 140 NA	-- 32 62 -- (62)	70	71	1	Yes*
3	Northwest Corner of Ramsey Avenue and Upper Bus Loop Entrance	Ramsey Avenue / Residential	Mobile Buses Mobile Autos Idling Buses Idling Trains	30 30 NA NA	67 0 -- -- (67)	70	72	2	Yes*
4	West Side of Residential Building Facing Upper Bus Loop	Bus Facility / Residential	Mobile Buses Mobile Autos Idling Buses Idling Trains	NA 60 35 NA	-- 35 64 -- (64)	69	70	1	Yes*
5	South Side of Residential Facing Ramsey Avenue	Ramsey Avenue / Residential	Mobile Buses Mobile Autos Idling Buses Idling Trains	NA 30 NA NA	-- 0 -- -- (0)	69	69	0	No
6	West Side of Office Building Facing METRO Station	CSXT/ METRO / Office	Mobile Buses Mobile Autos Idling Buses Idling Trains	170 170 NA 90	38 36 -- 54 (55)	78	78	0	No
7	North Side of Office Building Facing Colesville Road	Colesville Road / Office	Mobile Buses Mobile Autos Idling Buses Idling Trains	70 70 NA NA	63 52 -- -- (63)	78	78	0	No

Notes: NA -- Not Applicable
** Change in noise level would be imperceptible. Refer to the "Potential Effects" section.*

Road traffic noise levels at Site 3 would exceed the FHWA noise abatement criterion of 66 dBA for this land use since buses accessing the terminal are expected to generate an hourly L_{eq} of 67 dBA. Although the future project-generated bus noise levels (67 dBA) at this site are less than the existing noise level (70 dBA), the future levels (72 dBA) would only add 2 dBA to the existing noise level – such an increase would not be noticeable to residents of the area.

Road traffic noise levels at Site 4 are not expected to exceed the FHWA noise acceptability criterion of 66 dBA for this land use since the future traffic is expected to generate an hourly Leq of 64 dBA. Although the future project-generated noise levels (64 dBA) at this site are less than the existing noise level (69 dBA), the Project-generated bus noise level (64 dBA) would add 1 dBA to the existing noise level (69 dBA) resulting in a total noise of 70 dBA. This total noise level (70 dBA) reflects an increase of 1 dBA over the existing noise level (69 dBA) – such an increase would not be noticeable to residents of the area.

The FTA vibration impact criteria were applied to assess the bus vibration effects from the Project. The FTA impact criterion at residential receptors for "frequent" bus events (more than 70 buses in one hour) is a maximum particle velocity of 0.004 in/sec (72 VdB) for single bus pass by. Assuming that the buses travel at a speed of 30 mph, single pass by maximum vibration levels at the sensitive sites beyond approximately 20 feet (6 meters) are expected to be well below the criterion level. No vibration effects are anticipated from this Project and no further analysis is required.

Mitigation Measures

WMATA Construction Noise Specifications establish different limits for continuous and intermittent construction noise at the affected structure or area. These specifications will ensure that disturbance to adjacent communities during construction of the facility will be minimized. During construction, coordination with adjacent communities is recommended in order to address any concerns regarding construction noise.

Transportation Facilities, Services and Mobility

Transit Facilities, Services, and Ridership

Existing Conditions

The project site currently accommodates WMATA METRO and Metrobus, MARC, and Ride-On, the Montgomery County bus service. On-site facilities include the Silver Spring METRO Station and elevated platforms, a lower-level bus loop with 15 revenue and five staging bus bays, an upper bus/kiss-and-ride facility with loading/unloading curbside space for six buses and a kiss-and-ride facility for 52 cars. The cul-de-sac at the end of Bonifant Street serves as a drop-off area for automobile passengers as well as a staging area for taxicabs. Buses use Ramsey Avenue and Bonifant Street for storage and layover.

The Silver Spring METRO Station has the second largest number of passenger boardings of any Maryland METRO

station, and is the 5th busiest METRO station outside of the District, with 12,500 daily boardings. Silver Spring is also one of the busiest bus transfer stations in the region, with 145 buses/hour in the peak periods serving approximately 19,500 daily bus boardings (including transfers between buses and between METRO and bus). Both WMATA and Ride-On provide extensive service to the Silver Spring area as well as outlying communities. Ride-On operates 18 routes that serve Silver Spring, Kensington, and Langley Park while WMATA operates 26 routes from Bethesda to as far north as Burtonsville in the US 29 corridor.

Today, all 20 bus bays at the existing station are utilized. Ride-On is operating with wholly inadequate facilities, serving 60 buses an hour with a single curb lane with five stops, plus three of WMATA's 15 bays. The Ride-On stops are several hundred feet away from the METRO station entrance, provide insufficient shelter during inclement weather, and provide waiting areas that are cramped and congested, especially during peak periods. Planned and possible expansion by Ride-On, WMATA, MTA, Shuttle-UM, and the addition of an intercity bus terminal, may increase peak hour bus volumes from the existing 145 buses/hour to 220 buses/hour.

Operationally, bus service is hampered by the requirement to cross Wayne Ave to access the "jug handle" connection to Colesville Road. Buses often must block one direction of traffic (3 lanes on Colesville Road) to cross or turn onto the other direction.

During the next 20 years, it is anticipated that the number of bus trips per hour will double due to increased ridership. The increased transit trips are projected due to the anticipated growth in residential and employment in the area. By year 2025, the number of patrons is expected to increase by 70% to approximately 97,000.

Potential Effects

The Project will have regional as well as local benefits. Improvements to an already busy station will increase the quality, attractiveness and patronage of the facility. Located in the heart of Silver Spring, the Project will facilitate the dispersion of Virginia, Washington DC and Maryland patrons into other areas of Silver Spring, which will strengthen the economic revitalization of Silver Spring by incorporating accessible and efficient transit connections with residential and office locations. Further, the Project supports WMATA's Regional Bus Study's goals for attracting new riders by offering higher quality service and meeting the growing transit demand.

Transit centers are identified as a key element in providing high quality transit service in the Washington system (WMATA, 2003).

The Project will accommodate the expected increase in patronage and transit services by relocating the majority of bus operations to within the Transit Center and improving vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation in and around the Transit Center. The benefits to transit users include improved access to the METRO station, with a fully covered bus facility providing an enclosed environment for transfers and waiting areas, greater capacity with an additional 50% to 90% increase in the number bus bays, removal of the unsafe crossing of Wayne Avenue to Colesville Road via the "jug handle". Further, the Project will incorporate bus bays and a ticketing area for the intercity bus service to enhance intermodal connections. These benefits extend beyond Maryland residents to include the substantial number of non-Maryland residents commuting outbound to Silver Spring. More than 34% of AM peak period alightings at Silver Spring are District of Columbia residents, while 20% are Virginia residents.

The improved station environs is expected to increase transit mode share for trips between the greater Silver Spring area and the District of Columbia, in addition to the new trips from the development proposed on the site. Any increase in transit mode share has a beneficial impact to air quality, use of natural resources, and traffic congestion.

The WMATA Silver Spring METRO Station is currently located on the western edge of the project site and will not be disturbed during construction.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Traffic and Parking

Existing Conditions

The three major highways that traverse the Silver Spring CBD, Colesville Road (US 29/MD 384), Georgia Avenue (US 29/MD 97), and East-West Highway (MD 410) currently provide regional access to the project site. All access roads, in particular US 29, also serve as commuter routes, carrying passenger cars with neither downtown origin nor destination through the Silver Spring CBD. Several streets including Wayne Avenue, Bonifant Street, and Ramsey Street provide local access to the Silver Spring Transit Center site. Figure 11

Traffic on northbound Colesville Road

shows Level-of-Service (LOS) at key locations in the project area.

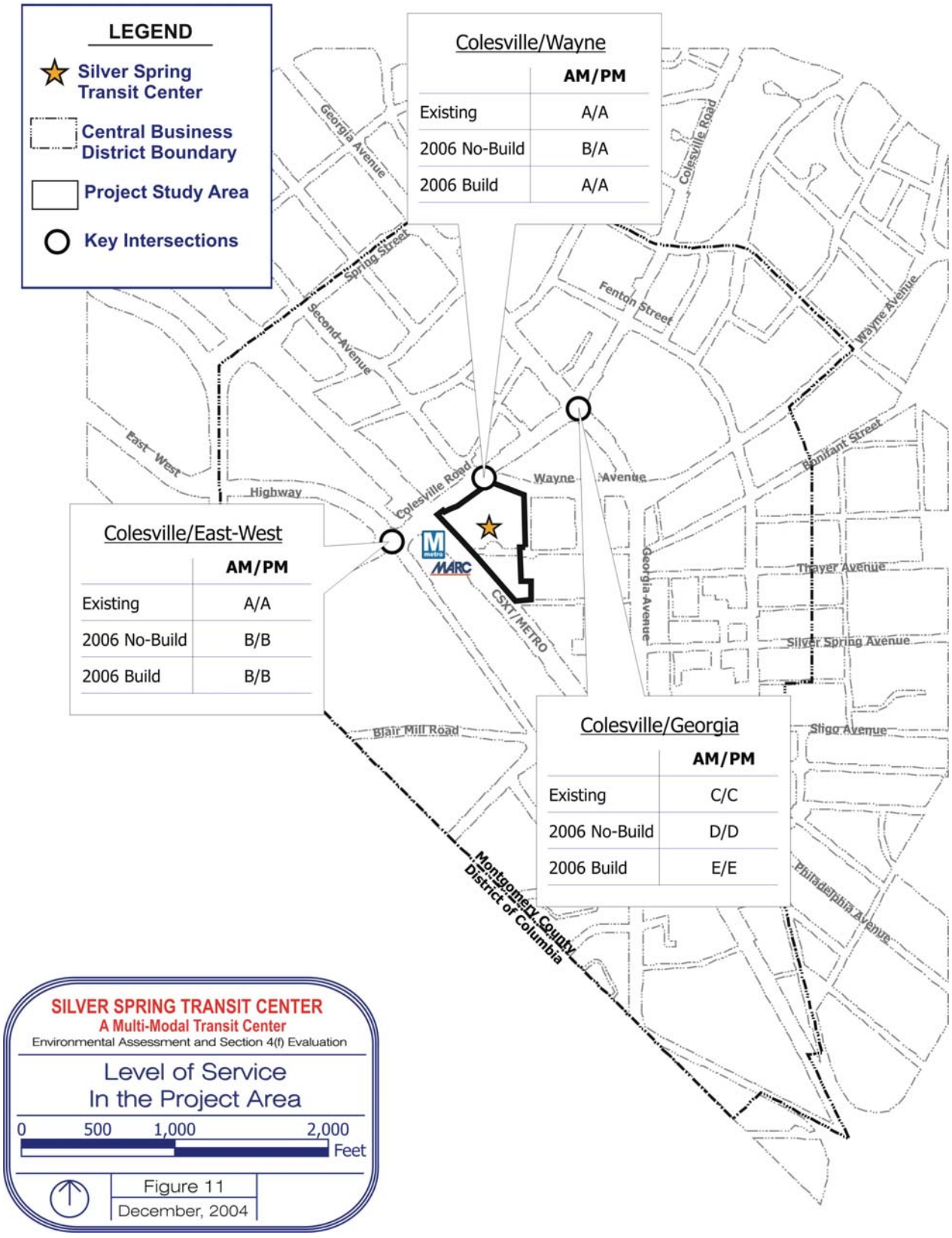
Traffic circulation problems currently exist in the immediate vicinity of the Silver Spring Transit Center. This is in part due to the multiple access points into the existing project site, particularly along Wayne Avenue between Colesville Road and Ramsey Avenue, and the existing bus-only "jug handle" between Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue.

Level-of-Service (LOS) calculations for the study intersections were computed, using Critical Lane Volume (CLV) techniques approved by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). For the Silver Spring CBD, an intersection operation at a CLV of 1,800 or less (v/c of 1.13) is considered acceptable, with no further analysis or mitigation measures required. Table 9 shows the existing traffic LOS for the major intersections around the existing Transit Center. For the existing traffic conditions, all intersections in the immediate vicinity operate at a LOS C or better in the peak hour.

Table 9: Existing Level-of-Service

Intersection	Existing	
	AM	PM
Colesville Road and East-West Highway	A	A
Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue/Second Avenue	A	A
East-West Highway and Giant Plaza Entrance	A	A
Georgia Avenue and Bonifant Street	A	B
Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road	C	C
Georgia Avenue and Wayne Avenue	B	B
Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Street	A	A
Wayne Avenue and Dixon Avenue	A	A
Bonifant Street and Dixon Avenue	A	A

Existing traffic queues at the study intersections were verified in the field, and compared to the distance between intersections, in order to determine if there is enough storage length. Currently, no queue is longer than 80% of the distance to the upstream intersection, which M-NCPPC considers acceptable. The problems that occur are mainly due to buses crossing northbound Colesville Road, blocking traffic in that direction. Similar problems occur when buses cross Wayne Avenue to enter the current project site, blocking traffic on Wayne Avenue.


LEGEND
Silver Spring Transit Center
Central Business District Boundary
Project Study Area
Key Intersections
Colesville/Wayne
AM/PM
Existing A/A
2006 No-Build B/A
2006 Build A/A
Colesville/East-West
AM/PM
Existing A/A
2006 No-Build B/B
2006 Build B/B
Colesville/Georgia
AM/PM
Existing C/C
2006 No-Build D/D
2006 Build E/E
Georgia Avenue
Colesville Road
Spring Street
Second Avenue
Fenton Street
Wayne Avenue
East West Highway
Colesville Road
Wayne Avenue
Bonifant Street
MARC
CSXT/METRO
Georgia Avenue
Thayer Avenue
Silver Spring Avenue
Blair Mill Road
Sligo Avenue
Montgomery County
District of Columbia
Philadelphia Avenue
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Level of Service
In the Project Area
0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet
Figure 11
December, 2004

Existing parking

The current Silver Spring Transit Center provides 52 short-term kiss-and-ride parking spaces, located adjacent to the Silver Spring Metrorail Station. Full day public parking can be found in municipal lots throughout the Silver Spring CBD, with the closest location at the Bonifant-Dixon Garage and the Second-Cameron Garage, both approximately 1,500-2,500 feet from the project site. Long-term parking costs $0.40 per hour; the Bonifant-Dixon Garage is open to Montgomery County Parking Convenience Sticker (PCS) permit holders. The Bonifant-Dixon Garage currently has approximately 1,650 long-term parking spaces; the Second-Cameron Garage has approximately 1,265 long-term spaces.

Potential Effects

Future 2006 No-Build Conditions

The Project is expected to open in the year 2006. Without improvements, the traffic circulation problems that currently exist in the project area will continue. Level-of-Service calculations for the study intersections were computed using CLV. Table 10 shows the 2006 No-Build LOS.[8]

For the 2006 No-Build traffic conditions, the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Wayne Avenue operates at a LOS B in the AM Peak, and at LOS E in the PM Peak. All other intersections in the immediate vicinity operate at a LOS D or better in the peak hour. Additionally, No-Build traffic queues at the study intersections were calculated based on the forecasts. No queue is projected to be longer than 80% of the distance to the upstream intersection.

Table 10: 2006 No-Build Level-of-Service

Intersection	2006 No-Build	
	AM	PM
Colesville Road and East-West Highway	B	B
Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue/Second Avenue	B	A
Georgia Avenue and Bonifant Street	A	B
Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road	D	D
Georgia Avenue and Wayne Avenue	B	E
Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Street	A	A
Wayne Avenue and Dixon Avenue	A	A

[8] A comparison of CLV volumes at the intersections of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue and Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue determined that the CLV is lower in 2025 than in 2006. The 2006 traffic has the greater impact; therefore, the analysis was conducted on the 2006 traffic.

Future 2006 Build Conditions

The addition of the transit-oriented/joint development will generate approximately 600 new peak hour trips to the site, including 162 bus trips and approximately 450 automobile trips. For the purposes of this analysis, the projected increases of bus volumes for 2025 were included in the 2006 analysis as well, making impacts identical in 2006 and 2025. Therefore, similar to No-Build traffic, the 2006 Build traffic was analyzed as the year with the greatest impact. Several improvements would be made in the vicinity to remove some of the circulation problems, and improve system operations:

- Installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Colesville Road and the lower level entrance to the Transit Center.
- At the entrance of Ramsey Avenue and Bonifant Street, restrict vehicles leaving the Transit Center from turning left onto Ramsey Avenue.
- Installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Dixon Avenue.
- At the intersection of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue, adding a dedicated bus only thru-left along southbound Colesville Road. This will allow for buses traveling along Colesville Road to access the upper level of the Transit Center. This reconfiguration will remove the northbound Colesville Road left turn onto Second Avenue.
- Reconfiguring the existing "jug handle" on the northeast corner of intersection of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue (buses only today) to provide movement of all vehicle types from northbound Colesville Road to westbound Second Avenue.
- Restripe Dixon Avenue as two lanes in each direction, to better accommodate added vehicular volume.
- Install a stop sign along northbound Ramsey Avenue, at the Transit Center upper level entrance.

Table 11 shows the 2006 Build traffic LOS results, with these improvements included.

Table 11: 2006 Build Level-of-Service

Intersection	2006 Build	
	AM	PM
Colesville Road and East-West Highway	B	B
Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue/Second Avenue	A	A
Georgia Avenue and Bonifant Street	A	C
Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road	E	E

Georgia Avenue and Wayne Avenue	C	E
Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Street	A	A
Wayne Avenue and Dixon Avenue	A	A

For the 2006 Build traffic conditions, the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Wayne Avenue operates at a LOS C in the AM Peak, and at LOS E in the PM Peak. The intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road operates at a LOS E in both the AM and the PM Peak. All other intersections in the immediate vicinity operate at a LOS C or better in the peak hour.

Build traffic queues at the study intersections were calculated based on the forecasts. No queue is projected to be longer than 80% of the distance to the upstream intersection.

The addition of the transit-oriented/joint development will add approximately 450 automobile trips in the peak hour that will require parking. The Project is proposed to include two separate parking facilities; a 250-space garage under the office building, and a 400-space garage under the hotel. The garage will provide the parking needs for both the hotel and the residential building, as well as provide for some parking for the office building. Some commuters to the site will choose to park off-site, and the municipal garages will absorb the extra parking demand, most likely the Bonifant-Dixon Garage.

As with existing conditions, no long-term parking will be provided on-site for the Transit Center. Short-term kiss-and-ride spaces will be provided on the third level of the Transit Center. There will be no reduction in kiss-and-ride capacity.

Mitigation Measures

In addition to the recommendations and mitigation measures made in the 2006 Build Conditions section, signal timings and phasings must reflect higher pedestrian volumes at the following intersections:

- Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue/Second Avenue
- Colesville Road and the Lower Level Entrance
- Wayne Avenue and Ramsey Street

Pedestrian crossing Colesville Road

At the intersection of Colesville Road and the lower level entrance of the Transit Center, pedestrians can only cross across the south leg of the intersection. The signal at this intersection should be phased to allow pedestrians crossing

Colesville Road to be able to reach the median of Colesville Road safely.

For the Silver Spring CBD, an intersection operation at a CLV of 1,800 or less (v/c of 1.13) is considered acceptable, with no further analysis or mitigation measures required. Both intersections with LOS E (Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue and Wayne) have CLV's less than 1,800.

Construction and Utilities

Existing Conditions

The project site contains water, sewer, drainage, gas, power, and communication infrastructure. Off-site (and some on-site) water and sanitary sewer facilities are owned by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), drainage lines by Montgomery County, gas lines by the Washington Gas Company, power facilities by the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), and communication facilities by COMCAST, MCI/WorldCom, and Verizon Maryland Inc.

Potential Effects

Utilities

The Project will impact existing utilities. The design team will verify that local utilities have the capacity needed to serve the office building, hotel, and residential building as well as services associated with the underground parking and Transit Center. Existing on-site storm drains, underground and overhead power lines, and water lines that serve the current site will be relocated to allow for the development of the site. Existing storm drains, sanitary sewers, telephone and fiber optic lines, and any other distribution facilities that bisect the site will be relocated to allow for the development of the site. Potential effects to utility infrastructure will be localized and undertaken in a manner so as to avoid disruption of service.

Existing storm sewers requiring relocation include: a 54" storm drain from Colesville Road, which outfalls to an existing 6'x8' box culvert under the METRO station, and a 42" storm drain adjacent to the rail facility. Both the 54" and 42" storm drain systems contain drainage from off-site. Several other on-site storm drains, that do not contain off-site drainage, will also be relocated.

The existing WSSC sanitary sewer systems that contain off-site areas and need to be relocated include 8" lines from Ripley Street and from the west site of the rail facilities as well as a 10" line that parallels Colesville Road. Both outfall to a 10" sanitary

sewer line that crosses the rail facilities near Colesville Road. The relocation of water lines will be for on-site service only.

There is an existing 36-way Verizon fiber-optic duct bank adjacent and parallel to Colesville Road. The exact location of the duct bank, as well as the possible implications to the duct bank, is unknown at this time. The Project will be designed to avoid this if at all possible. The Project will require the relocation of overhead PEPCO facilities along Bonifant Street and Ramsey Avenue and an existing 6V PEPCO duct bank adjacent to Bonifant Street. On-site underground power lines that feed the site will also be relocated.

Construction Impacts

Construction of the Project will not involve any unusual or particularly dangerous construction methods, procedures, or locations that would pose any substantial safety or security concerns. The Transit Center is expected to take 18-24 months to construct. Public safety will be addressed through the proper design and engineering of the Transit Center and associated buildings as well as the selection of building materials. All of these items are addressed in state and local building codes and design standards used by WMATA.

South of METRO Station on Colesville Road

Some construction activities will temporarily increase vehicular conflicts where detours or lane closures are required to facilitate construction. These short-term roadway interruptions will occur along the three surrounding streets: Colesville Road, Wayne Avenue, and Ramsey Avenue. Access to the Silver Spring METRO Station must remain open throughout construction.

Mitigation Measures

Coordination will occur with the appropriate agencies responsible for utility service in the project area. Specific mitigation measures may be developed during final design, as more detailed information on utility relocations becomes available.

Continued coordination with the State Highway Administration (SHA) for work involving Colesville Road will occur as well as coordinating with Montgomery County, who owns and maintains Wayne Avenue, Ramsey Avenue and Bonifant Street. Traffic safety maintenance measures, such as traffic plans employing temporary traffic signs, roadway striping and possible alternate routes will be employed to minimize conflicts. Coordination by the Partners with WMATA will be required to maintain operations at the Silver Spring METRO Station.

The Project will use standard construction safety practices, as established by state and local building codes and WMATA specifications, to minimize the potential for accidents and other safety issues during construction. The Project will develop maintenance of traffic plans to minimize risks to local traffic. In order to keep the public informed, the Project team will inform residents regarding when, how and where construction activities and operations will occur.

Safety and Security

The current Silver Spring METRO Station, with its many curb cuts and the jug handle at Wayne Avenue and Colesville Road, creates numerous potential conflict points between buses and pedestrians. The proposed Project will eliminate many of these conflicts by modifying the jug handle at Wayne Avenue and Colesville Road, adjacent to the Discovery Communications Headquarters, and providing bus access to the Transit Center at a signalized entrance on Colesville Road and an entrance on Ramsey Avenue. Patrons would access the kiss-and-ride facility from Ramsey Avenue.

WMATA has established safety and security procedures that would continue to be followed at the Transit Center. The Transit Center and parking lots would be well lit and patrolled for security purposes, in the same manner as other WMATA facilities. Proper signage, signals, vehicle speeds, striping, barriers, safety training for bus and train operators, fencing (where appropriate) and general safety standards would be followed to enhance safety of pedestrians and motorists. An emergency response program and procedures will be developed and tested, in cooperation with appropriate agencies, prior to the start of operations at the Transit Center.

Secondary and Cumulative Effects

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)'s regulation 40 CFR § 1508.8(b) describes secondary or indirect impacts as: "…caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable." The CEQ regulations define cumulative effects as: "…the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal, or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions." (40 CFR §1508.7, 1997).

The project site currently includes the WMATA Silver Spring METRO Station, bus bays, MARC, and other ancillary transportation services. This EA generally evaluates the two components of the proposed project – the Transit Center and the transit-oriented/joint development – as one to address their combined effects; therefore, this EA reflects total project impacts. However, the addition of the transit-oriented/joint development will affect traffic and parking, and generate additional transit riders. The benefits and impacts from the Project will be less than what is described in this EA if the transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project is not undertaken.

As described in the "Purpose and Need" section, downtown Silver Spring is experiencing extensive growth and investment, both public and private. The Project will complement and enhance these investments in Silver Spring by providing efficient bus, vehicle and pedestrian uses, road and traffic improvements, and improving the function of urban open space and the confluence of new regional bike trails. The improved Transit Center and surrounding area are expected to increase transit mode share for trips between the greater Silver Spring vicinity and the District of Columbia, in addition to the new trips from the transit-oriented/joint development proposed on the site. An increase in transit mode share benefits air quality by reducing traffic congestion.

There will be secondary effects from the transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project – traffic analyses indicate that this development will generate approximately 600 new peak hour trips to the site, which includes 162 bus trips and approximately 450 automobile trips in the peak hour that will require parking that will be accommodated on-site. The Project includes two separate parking facilities; a 250-space garage under the office building, and a 400-space garage under the hotel. The garage will provide the parking needs for both the hotel and the residential building, as well as provide for some parking for the office building. Some commuters to the site will choose to park off-site and the existing municipal garages will absorb the extra parking demand. The transit-oriented/joint development portion of the Project will have no other impacts.

As with existing conditions, no long-term parking will be provided on-site for the Transit Center. Short-term kiss-and-ride spaces will be provided on the third level of the Transit Center and there will be no reduction in kiss-and-ride capacity.

The Project supports WMATA's *Regional Bus Study* goals for attracting new riders by offering higher quality service and meeting the growing transit demand. Further, the transit-

oriented/joint development on the project site is not only compatible with the use of the Transit Center site, but also totally in keeping with current development and with the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan*. The Project benefits, but will not cause any negative secondary or cumulative effects on, the Silver Spring CBD.

Permits

The Project will require reviews and approvals by federal, state and local agencies and interested stakeholders to ensure the timely completion of the planning, design, and construction phases of the Project. On-going coordination with the key agencies and stakeholders is central to the review and approval process. In addition to the approvals noted previously in this EA, the Project requires the following permits:

- Montgomery County sediment control permit
- Montgomery County grading and construction permits.

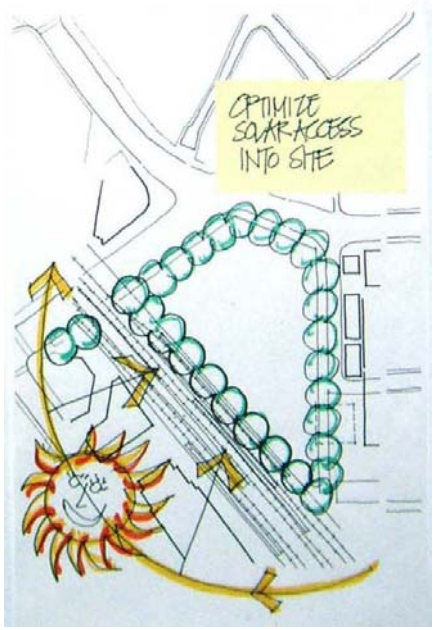
Section 4(f) Evaluation

Photo of Metro Urban Park
Source: M-NCPPC Website

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 USC 303(c), requires that the proposed use of land from a publicly-owned public park, recreation area, wildlife and/or waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site, as part of a federally funded or approved transportation project, is permissible only if there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use. Final action requiring the taking of such land must document and demonstrate that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use.

This EA incorporates a Section 4(f) Evaluation due to the proposed displacement of the existing Metro Urban Park as a result of the Preferred Alternative. The Project will not require right-or-way or otherwise adversely affect National Register-listed or eligible historic and archaeological resources. Therefore, the Project does not involve a Section 4(f) use of National Register-listed or eligible historic and archaeological resources.

Description of Proposed Action

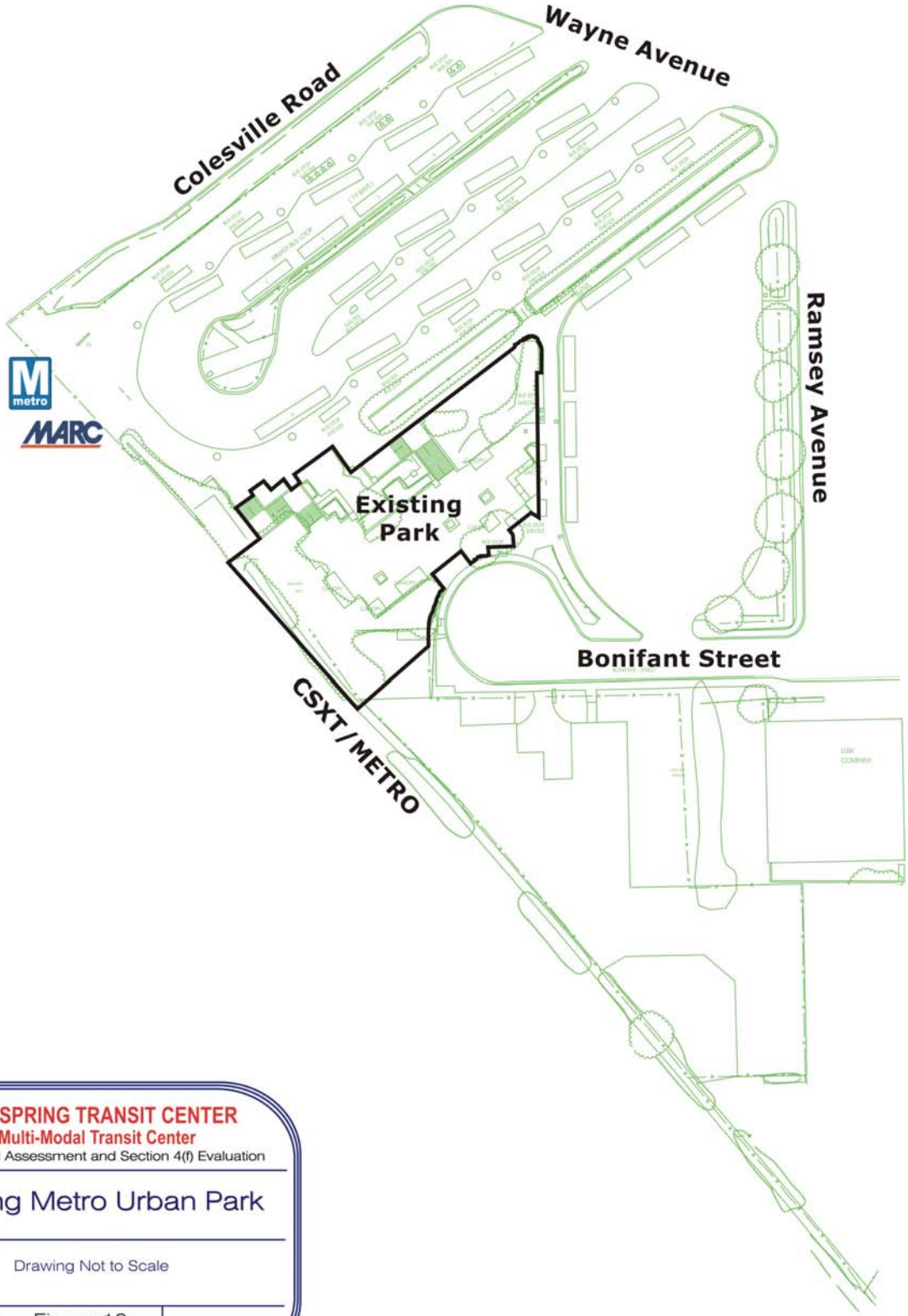


The Preferred Alternative involves the relocation of an approximately 0.77 acre public park to create the Transit Center and transit-oriented/joint development (Figure 12). The "Alternatives Considered" chapter of this document contains a full description of the proposed Project.

The relocated park will be situated at the corner of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue and will be the same size as the existing Metro Urban Park (Figure 13). The Project has been carefully designed to create a space that will have the maximum amount of southern exposure to the sun.

The urban park and additional public amenity space will serve as the centerpiece of the Project, accommodating a range of active and passive, programmed and spontaneous pedestrian functions and assembled in a manner that effectively unifies the Transit Center and private development components together with the surrounding neighborhood. The public space will feature elements that celebrate the unique qualities of Silver Spring and invite social activity and civic life into the area, including the following elements:

- An on-site 0.77-acre replacement park (located primarily at elevations 308', 312', and 330') that is visible and easily accessible from all directions to the surrounding community.



SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Existing Metro Urban Park

Drawing Not to Scale

Figure 12
December, 2004

SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
A Multi-Modal Transit Center
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Proposed Park

Drawing Not to Scale

Figure 13
December, 2004

Overall Public Space Design Elements Under Consideration:

- Active water features
- Decorative paving and pathways
- Terraced plazas for congregating, lounging and outdoor dining
- Landscape greens and tree-lined walks
- Passive sitting areas
- Active gathering areas
- Integrated sculptural elements and artistic expressions
- Decorative accent lighting
- Movable benches and tables
- Kiosks for information and vending
- Decorative architectural canopies for weather protection
- Decorative retaining walls and railings
- Decorative signage and way-finding
- Raised-bed landscape planters

- Extensions to two open space areas located adjacent to the project site. These two areas consist of a traffic "jug handle" and a site called the "Ripley Triangle".

The existing Capital Crescent Trail passes along the western edge of the project site and connects to an extensive network of regional trails. Two major bicycle trails and a series of on- and off-road bicycle connections are planned in the project area. The Metropolitan Branch Trail will link with the Capital Crescent Trail at the Silver Spring Transit Center and extend to Union Station in Washington, D.C. The Silver Spring Green Trail will connect to the Capital Crescent Trail just north of the Silver Spring Transit Center, follow east along Second Avenue to Colesville Road, and continue along Wayne Avenue to connect with the Sligo Creek Hiker-Biker Trail. The Silver Spring Green Trail is currently under construction as part of the redevelopment in downtown Silver Spring with an expected completion date of mid 2006.

The Project will be designed to accommodate connections to future extensions of the Capital Crescent Trail, the Metropolitan Branch Trail, the Silver Spring Green Trail, as well as the potential Bi-County Transitway. The alignments for these proposed facilities have yet to be finalized; however, the Project does not conflict with or preclude any of the alternative alignments currently under consideration.

Description and Significance of Section 4(f) Resources

Capital Crescent Trail

WMATA owns Metro Urban Park, which is a 0.77-acre, public park located at 1171 Bonifant Street between the existing kiss-and-ride lot and the WMATA bus loop (Figure 10). WMATA received a direct appropriation from the U.S. Congress for the purchase of property related to the METRO Red Line extension; therefore, no Maryland Program Open Space funds or Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds were used to acquire this property.[1]

WMATA granted a perpetual open space easement to the M-NCPPC in 1977 to create an on-site park as mitigation for impacts to the County-owned Jesup Blair Park as a result of the METRO Red Line extension. The original provisions for the park provided for the possible future relocation in the case of on-site joint development.[2] The M-NCPPC maintains the park grounds and amenities and describes the Metro Urban Park as an "urban

[1] Telephone conversation with Joyce Yette, WMATA Office of General Counsel, on April 29, 2004.

[2] The open space easement functions as an open space park providing pedestrian friendly access to existing kiss & ride, taxi and bus areas. The entire site upon which the metro station and the open space easement are located was acquired for transit purposes. The open space easement was granted in connection with the development of the transit station and contemplates both joint development and the possible relocation of the easement. While the applicant is not asking that the open space be excluded from 4(f) review, it should be kept in mind that the land in question is transit land being proposed to be reused for transit purposes and that the open space was in furtherance of that transit use. Likewise, the project will replace the open space with similarly sized and better functioning open space serving the same purpose as the original open space.

Photo of Metro Urban Park
Source: M-NCPPC Website

gathering place".[3] The park, one of several small public gathering spaces in downtown Silver Spring, provides paved plazas, planters, and stairways connecting the WMATA METRO entrance to the kiss-and-ride lot and the upper WMATA bus loop. The park provides a pedestrian thoroughfare between the various transit facilities currently located on site, benches, and additional seating (around the planters) for transit patrons to gather and wait for transit connections at the existing station.

M-NCPPC confirmed that there is no future (park) facility development plan for Metro Urban Park at its present location.[4]

A tree survey was performed on March 30, 2004 as part of the Forest Conservation Act requirements. WMATA planted the majority of the surveyed trees around the perimeter and on the various islands and medians within the site.

Proposed Use of Section 4(f) Resources

The Project will displace the existing Metro Urban Park to accommodate an expanded transportation facility and transit-oriented/joint development opportunities. The Project will permanently remove the existing on-site vegetation and temporarily disturb urban wildlife (squirrels and birds). However, since the existing site contains a transit facility, minimal effects are expected. The mammals and birds currently using the project area as habitat would relocate to undisturbed areas during construction.

The Project includes a replacement park, tentatively named the "Silver Spring Urban Park" to mitigate the impact to the existing Metro Urban Park. Landscaping and vegetation will be replaced in appropriate locations.

Avoidance Options and Measures to Minimize Harm

In accordance with Section 4(f) regulations, the following sections provide a general discussion of avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures for impacts to Metro Urban Park.

Avoidance Alternatives

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build or "do nothing" Alternative, maintains the existing site configuration. The No-Build Alternative does not fulfill the purpose and need for the Project as it would not accommodate increased patronage and transit services; would not facilitate vehicular or pedestrian circulation; would not upgrade the existing transit facility to meet current ADA requirements; would not reduce

[3] http://www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/facilities/master_parks_list.shtm#M
[4] Telephone conversation with Bill Gries, M-NCPPC Park Acquisition Division, on April 26, 2004.

Existing Vegetation in Metro Urban Park:

- 27 Zelkova's (standard variety; and Green Vase and Village Green cultivars), 5 to 10 inch DBH at 4-1/2 feet above finished grade.
- 16 Honey Locust's, 1-1/4 to 5 inch DBH
- 11 Willow Oak's, 4 to 30 inch DBH
- 16 Bradford Pear's, 10 to 20 inch DBH
- 3 Birch's spp., 9 to 13 inch DBH
- 1 each of Holly spp., Arborvitae, Kousa Dogwood, Weeping Japanese Maple, and Japanese Black Pine.

DBH = Diameter At Breast Height

conflicts between buses, cars, and pedestrians trying to access the transit station; and would not support and contribute to the revitalization of the Silver Spring CBD. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative is not a "feasible and prudent" alternative to using the (park) land.

Previously-Considered Alternatives

Previously considered build alternatives sought to avoid the existing Metro Urban Park, altogether, one being to not include the area adjacent to Colesville Road in the Project design. After further refinement of the Project's purpose and need and the required functional and design elements for the Transit Center, it was determined that these elements could not be accomplished without displacing the existing park.

The Project investigated a total of 11 build alternatives that included the required design elements for the Transit Center; however, due to the complex nature of the Project, all resulted in the complete displacement of Metro Urban Park. Therefore, the (build) avoidance alternatives are not a "feasible and prudent" alternative to using the (park) land.

Measures to Minimize Harm

No minimization alternatives were feasible since the existing Metro Urban Park is located in the middle of the project site.

Mitigation Measures

Existing Vegetation around Metro Urban Park:

- A dense planting of trees exist between the park and the railroad right-of-way. These trees are within a fenced area and have a close on-center spacing that creates a shaded area. Trees in this are include:
- Multi-Stem Holly (estimated 22+/- feet height)
- Eastern White Pine (estimated 40+/- feet in height)
- Eastern Red Cedar (estimated 10+/- and 16+/- in height)

The Project will create a park that will be similar in size and function as the existing Metro Urban Park, expand open space in the existing "jug handle" and "Ripley Triangle", and provide increased amenities. The replacement park will be located on-site, at the corner of Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue – diagonally opposite the existing park. Design plans for the replacement park and open space areas are being developed in close coordination with WMATA, MTA, Montgomery County, and the M-NCPPC. The Project will accommodate connections to existing and future recreational trails.

The Project has been carefully designed to enhance the surroundings of the project site while serving its major function as a safe and convenient Transit Center. Street level retail will contribute to creating an attractive, welcoming public space. The public plaza and urban park will be the focus of pedestrian activity. Care has been taken to locate the buildings on the site so as to maximize the amount of sunlight in the public plaza and urban park. The Project will be a visual and aesthetic asset to the Silver Spring CBD.

On-site replacement of parkland

A full description of the proposed on-site replacement park and accompanying open space areas appears in the "Description of Proposed Action" section, presented earlier.

Consultation and Coordination

Project Team Coordination Meetings, of which representatives from M-NCPPC and WMATA attend, are held on a regular basis to discuss current topics and to review progress and issues associated with the Project. Further, plans for the replacement park are being developed in close coordination with M-NCPPC to design a park that meets open space guidelines. The Project team will continue to consult and coordinate with M-NCPPC, WMATA, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Forestry Division, and other stakeholders regarding potential impacts and mitigation measures.

This EA and Section 4(f) Evaluation will be distributed to and commented upon by the U.S. Department of the Interior, as required under Section 4(f) guidelines.

In compliance with historic preservation statutes and regulations, cultural resources subject to potential effects were identified and evaluated in an architectural and historic resources report, and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment. The SHPO has concurred that there are no adverse effects to National Register-listed or eligible historic properties or archaeological resources due to the Project; therefore, a Section 4(f) Evaluation of historic and archaeological resources is not required. The "Comments and Coordination" section of this document contains a copy of the SHPO's correspondence that indicates concurrence with a no effect determination to historic or archaeological resources by the Project.

COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

Community outreach and agency concurrence are cornerstones of the successful process. The public involvement process and the resource agencies consulted during the EA/Section 4(f) Evaluation process are described below. Copies of all relevant Project correspondence are included.

Agency Coordination

The following agencies have been involved throughout the EA/Section 4(f) Evaluation process – assisting with the determination of existing resources, reviewing effects and mitigation, and providing guidance toward the successful permitting of the Project:

- Federal Transit Administration
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Maryland State Highway Administration
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Montgomery County Department of Public Works & Transportation
- Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services
- U.S. Department of the Interior – Fish and Wildlife Service
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Fisheries Service
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Natural Heritage Program
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife and Heritage Service
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Forestry Division
- Maryland Historical Trust
- Maryland Department of Planning
- Maryland Department of the Environment.

<u>Environmental Assessment Working Group</u>

The EA Working Group met on March 30, 2004 to discuss the EA process and required information. The EA Working Group consists of representatives from the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, the Montgomery County Transportation Planning Division, the M-NCPPC, MTA,

WMATA and Project consultants. Topics of discussion centered around Project status and schedule, proposed site layout, potential effects to the transportation and street network, access issues, sight distance requirements, pedestrian linkages, safety, bus circulation, and traffic operations and analysis.

M-NCPPC Board Action

The Montgomery County Planning Board is responsible for the implementation of the subdivision process by reviewing and approving all preliminary plans, site plans and other plans for development in Montgomery County. The Project's preliminary plans and site plans will be required to be reviewed and approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Project will be reviewed for consistency with the adopted master plan, for its impact on the environment, for the quality of its design and compatibility with its neighbors, and for the availability of public facilities.

The process is composed of two basic phases: a staff evaluation and public hearing. The public is encouraged to participate in both phases. The staff evaluation includes the analysis and evaluation of the Project's plans as well as the coordination of other agency review of the plans. The Planning Board public hearing includes the recommendation from the staff evaluation, the Applicant's case and testimony from the public.

Community Involvement and Public Outreach

The Project team updated several community organizations over the past several years on the progress and status of the Project. These meetings were also a means to gain feedback and public comments on the Project: The following is a list of meetings:

- Silver Spring Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Committee – December 17, 2003 and April 28, 2004
- Silver Spring Citizen's Advisory Board – TMD Committee – April 8, 2004
- Discovery Communications (adjacent property owner) – March 17, 2004
- KSI (adjacent property owner) – November 4, 2003, April 2 and 14, 2004
- Community Meeting – November 4, 2004

A Public Hearing will be held by the M-NCPPC as part of their review process and provide the opportunity for the public to review and comment on the Project.

REFERENCES

The following information sources were used to prepare this EA:

Annotated Code of Maryland. Article 8. § 1-301 et seq. *Maryland Environmental Policy Act of 1973*, Md. Nat. Res. Code Ann

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Appendix A – Maryland Environmental Assessment

		Yes	No	Comments
A.	LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS			
1.	Will the action be within the 100-year floodplain?		X	
2.	Will the action require a permit for construction or alteration within the 50-year floodplain?		X	
3.	Will the action require a permit for dredging, filling draining or alteration of a wetland?		X	
4.	Will the action require a permit for the construction or operation of facilities for solid waste disposal including dredge and excavation spoil?		X	
5.	Will the action occur on slopes exceeding 15%?		X	
6.	Will the action require a grading plan or a sediment control permit?	X		The project will require an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan approval from the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS). A grading plan will be completed during final design. See Page 34.
7.	Will the action require a mining permit for deep or surface mining?		X	
8.	Will the action require a permit for drilling a gas or oil well?		X	
9.	Will the action require a permit for airport construction?		X	
10.	Will the action require a permit for the crossing of the Potomac River by conduits, cables or other like devices?		X	
11.	Will the action affect the use of a public recreation area, park, forest, wildlife management area, scenic river or wild land?	X		The project will displace the existing Metro Urban Park (0.77 acre) and will provide a replacement park, on-site, with the same size and function as contemplated in documents that established the park. See Page 57.
12.	Will the action affect the use of any natural or man-made features that are unique to the county, state, or nation?		X	
13.	Will the action affect the use of an archaeological or historical site or structure?		X	
B.	WATER USE CONSIDERATIONS			
14.	Will the action require a permit for the change of the course, current, or cross-section of a stream or other body of water?		X	
15.	Will the action require the construction, alteration, or removal of a dam, reservoir, or waterway obstruction?		X	
16.	Will the action change the overland flow of stormwater or reduce the absorption capacity of the ground?	X		The project may affect stormwater quantity and quality as a result of an increase of impervious surface. The project will require Stormwater Management Plan approval from the MCDPS. See Page 34.
17.	Will the action require a permit for the drilling of a water well?		X	
18.	Will the action require a permit for water appropriation?		X	
19.	Will the action require a permit for the construction and operation of facilities for treatment or distribution of water?		X	
20.	Will the action require a permit for the construction and operation of facilities for sewage treatment and/ or land disposal of liquid waste derivatives?		X	
21.	Will the action result in any discharge into surface or sub-surface water?		X	
22.	If so, will the discharge affect ambient water quality parameters and/ or require a discharge permit?		X	
C.	AIR USE CONSIDERATIONS			
23.	Will the action result in any discharge into the air?	X		
24.	If so, will the discharge affect ambient air quality parameters or produce a disagreeable odor?		X	
25.	Will the action generate additional noise that differs in character or level from present conditions?	X		Road traffic noise levels at one receptor site would exceed the FHWA Noise Acceptability Criterion of 66 dBA since buses accessing the bus terminal are expected to generate an hourly Leq of 67 dBA. The increase in the future bus noise levels over existing noise level would be approximately three decibels and such an increase would not be noticeable to residents of

Appendix A – Maryland Environmental Assessment

		Yes	No	Comments
				the area. See Page 40.
26.	Will the action preclude future use of related air space?		X	
27.	Will the action generate any radiological, electrical, magnetic, or light influence?		X	
D.	PLANTS AND ANIMALS			
28.	Will the action cause the disturbance, reduction or loss of any rare, unique or valuable plant or animal?		X	
29.	Will the action result in any significant reduction or loss of any fish or wildlife habitats?		X	
30.	Will the action require a permit for the use of pesticides, herbicides or other biological, chemical or radiological control agents?		X	
E.	SOCIO-ECONOMIC			
31.	Will the action result in a preemption or division of properties or impair their economic use?		X	
32.	Will the action cause relocation of activities, structures, or result in a change in the population density or distribution?		X	
33.	Will the action alter land values?		X	
34.	Will the action affect traffic flow and volume?	X		The project will improve traffic flow and volumes compared to existing conditions. See Page 44.
35.	Will the action affect the production, extraction, harvest or potential use of scarce or economically important resource?		X	
36.	Will the action require a license to construct a sawmill or other plant for the manufacture of forest products		X	
37.	Is the action in accord with federal, state, regional and local comprehensive or functional plan-including zoning?	X		The project complies with local land use and zoning regulations, Master Plans, and Maryland's Priority Places Strategy. See Page 18.
38.	Will the action affect the employment opportunities for persons in the area?	X		The project is expected to provide short-term increases in construction employment and long-term increases associated with the operation of the Transit Center and commercial employment.
39.	Will the action affect the ability of the area to attract new sources of tax revenue?	X		The Project provides an opportunity for joint public and private investments. The transit-oriented/joint development components of the Project are expected to provide a new source of business tax revenue. The Project is expected to have positive effects on commercial properties associated with the Silver Spring Transit Center as well as development within walking distance to the Transit Center. See Page 18.
40.	Will the action discourage present sources of tax revenue from remaining in the area, or affirmatively encourage them to relocate elsewhere?		X	
41.	Will the action affect the ability of the area to attract tourism?		X	
F.	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS			
42.	Could the action endanger the public health, safety, or welfare?		X	
43.	Could the action be eliminated without deleterious affects to the public health, safety, welfare or natural environment?	X		
44.	Will the action be of statewide significance?		X	
45.	Are there any other plans or actions (federal, state, county or private) that, in conjunction with the subject action could result in a cumulative or synergistic impact on the public health, safety, welfare, or environment?		X	
46.	Will the action require additional power generation or transmission capacity?		X	
G.	CONCLUSION			
47.	This agency will develop a complete environmental effects report on the proposed action.		X	This EA documents the environmental effects of the proposed action. See Page 18.

Appendix B - Correspondence

The following includes a compilation of correspondence with various agencies:

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Albert J. Genetti, Jr., P.E.
Director

April 7, 2004

Mr. Howard King, Director
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Service
Tawes Building, B-2
Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center
Request for information regarding RET, anadromous fish species, and unique habitats

Dear Mr. King:

Montgomery County and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) have reinitiated the Silver Spring Transit Center project that will create a full service intermodal transit center incorporating terminals for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Metro, MARC commuter rail, the future Bi-County Transitway, Metro bus, Montgomery County Ride-On bus, University of Maryland Shuttle bus, Inter-City bus, provisions for bicycles and pedestrians, a kiss-and-ride area, and taxis. The project site is south of Colesville Road and west of Ramsey Avenue in Silver Spring, Maryland (see attached map).

In July 2000, the MTA published an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Silver Spring Transit Center project. Since then, the project scope has changed to include joint development. The project will now also include public spaces consisting of a park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza, as well as a private component, including an office building, retail space along Colesville Road, a residential building with underground parking, and a hotel.

The project includes the following components:

- Bus bays for WMATA and Montgomery County buses, an intercity bus terminal with ticketing facilities and bus bays, Kiss-and-Ride spaces, taxi spaces, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- A 3-story intermodal transit center;
- A 9-12 story office building with approximately 200,000 gross square feet of class A office space;

- A 9-12 story full-service hotel with approximately 195 rooms;
- A 10-14 story apartment building(s) with approximately 260 units;
- A park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza;
- Infrastructure (road improvements and utility connections), amenities and open space required in connection with these joint development (private) opportunities.

For your reference, we have enclosed a copy of correspondence dated May 12, 1994 from the Fish, Heritage and Wildlife Administration indicating "there is no known Federal or State threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species present at this project site". A current determination of rare, threatened, or endangered fish species, anadromous fish species, or unique habitats present within 1,500 feet of the project site is requested.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact me at (240) 777-6071 or shri.gondhalekar@montgomerycountymd.gov

Sincerely,

Shri Gondhalekar AIA, Architect

SG:ahe

Enclosures

cc: Diane Ratcliff, MTA
Steve Plano, PB
Project file
Read file

William Donald Schaefer
Governor

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Tawes State Office Building
Fish, Heritage and Wildlife Administration
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Torrey C. Brown, M.D.
Secretary

May 12, 1994

NOV 17 1994

John Conner

Mike Rothenheber

Dan Cheng

Mr. Jon Connor
JOHNSON, MIRMIRAN AND THOMPSON PA
72 Loveton Circle
Sparks, MD 21152

RE: Silver Spring Transit Center, Contract # SRA 4299-203,
JMT Job #391396.09, Montgomery County

Dear Mr. Connor:

This is in regards to the above referenced project. There are no known Federal or State threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species present at this project site.

Sincerely,

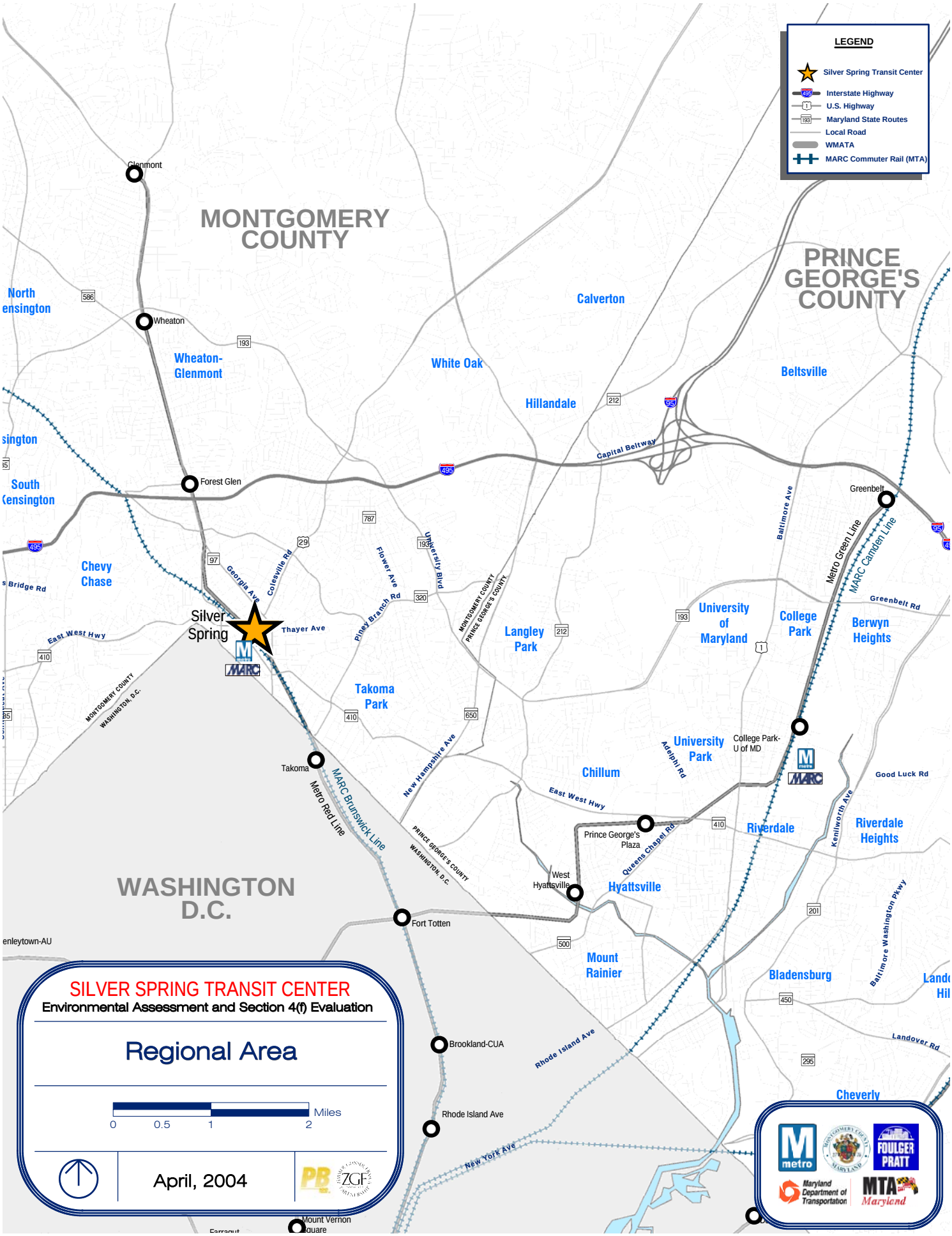
Janet McKegg

Janet McKegg, Director
Natural Heritage Program

JM:db

cc: Cynthia Sibrel
Robert Miller
ER# 94433.MO

Telephone: (410) 974-2870
DNR TTY for the Deaf: 301-974-3683


LEGEND
Silver Spring Transit Center
Interstate Highway
U.S. Highway
Maryland State Routes
Local Road
WMATA
MARC Commuter Rail (MTA)
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
WASHINGTON D.C.
Glenmont
Wheaton
Wheaton-Glenmont
North Kensington
South Kensington
Forest Glen
Chevy Chase
Silver Spring
Takoma
Takoma Park
Langley Park
Calverton
White Oak
Hillandale
Beltsville
Capital Beltway
Greenbelt
University of Maryland
College Park
Berwyn Heights
College Park-U of MD
University Park
Chillum
Prince George's Plaza
West Hyattsville
Hyattsville
Riverdale
Riverdale Heights
Mount Rainier
Bladensburg
Cheverly
Fort Totten
Brookland-CUA
Rhode Island Ave
Mount Vernon Square
Georgia Ave
Colesville Rd
Flower Ave
Piney Branch Rd
University Blvd
Baltimore Ave
Metro Green Line
MARC Camden Line
Greenbelt Rd
East West Hwy
Thayer Ave
MARC Brunswick Line
Metro Red Line
New Hampshire Ave
Adelphi Rd
Queens Chapel Rd
Kenilworth Ave
Good Luck Rd
Baltimore Washington Pkwy
Landover Rd
New York Ave
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Regional Area
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
April, 2004
PB
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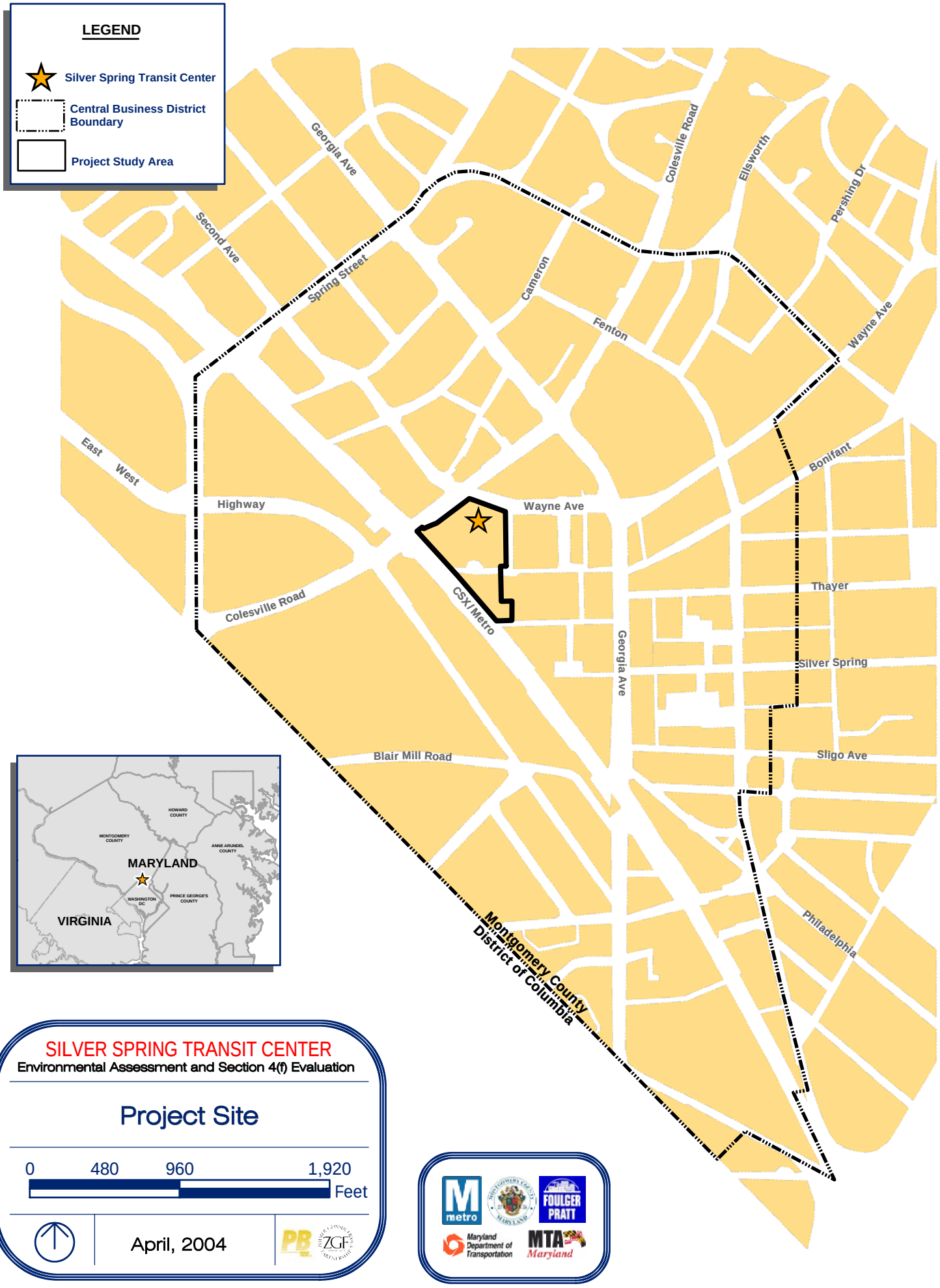
metro
FOULGER PRATT
Maryland Department of Transportation
MTA Maryland



SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER

Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Project Site

0 480 960 1,920 Feet

April, 2004

PB ZGF

metro Montgomery County Maryland FOULGER PRATT

Maryland Department of Transportation MTA Maryland

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

Albert J. Genetti, Jr., P.E.
Director

April 8, 2004

Mr. Glenn Therres
Associate Director, Natural Heritage Program
MD DNR, Wildlife and Heritage Service
Tawes Building, E-1
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center
Request for information regarding rare, threatened, endangered wildlife and plant species and unique habitats

Dear Mr. Therres:

Montgomery County and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) have reinitiated the Silver Spring Transit Center project that will create a full service intermodal transit center incorporating terminals for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Metro, MARC commuter rail, the future Bi-County Transitway, Metro bus, Montgomery County Ride-On bus, University of Maryland Shuttle bus, Inter-City bus, provisions for bicycles and pedestrians, a kiss-and-ride area, and taxis. The project site is south of Colesville Road and west of Ramsey Avenue in Silver Spring, Maryland (see attached map).

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- A 9-12 story office building with approximately 200,000 gross square feet of class A office space;

- A 9-12 story full-service hotel with approximately 195 rooms;
- A 10-14 story apartment building(s) with approximately 260 units;
- A park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza;
- Infrastructure (road improvements and utility connections), amenities and open space required in connection with these joint development (private) opportunities.

In correspondence dated May 12, 1994, your office indicated that "there is no known federal or state threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species present at this project site". We have enclosed a copy of the 1994 correspondence for your reference. Since your office may have received additional data since 1994, a current determination of state-listed or proposed-for-listing rare, endangered or threatened rare, endangered or threatened wildlife and plant species, or unique habitats present within 1,500 feet of the project site is requested.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact me at (240) 777-6071 or shri.gondhalekar@montgomerycountymd.gov

Sincerely,

Shri Gondhalekar AIA, Architect

SG:ahe

Enclosures

cc: Diane Ratcliff, MTA
Steve Plano, PB
Project file
Read file

William Donald Schaefer
Governor

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Tawes State Office Building
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580 Taylor Avenue
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May 12, 1994

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Mr. Jon Connor
JOHNSON, MIRMIRAN AND THOMPSON PA
72 Loveton Circle
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Janet McKegg

Janet McKegg, Director
Natural Heritage Program

JM:db

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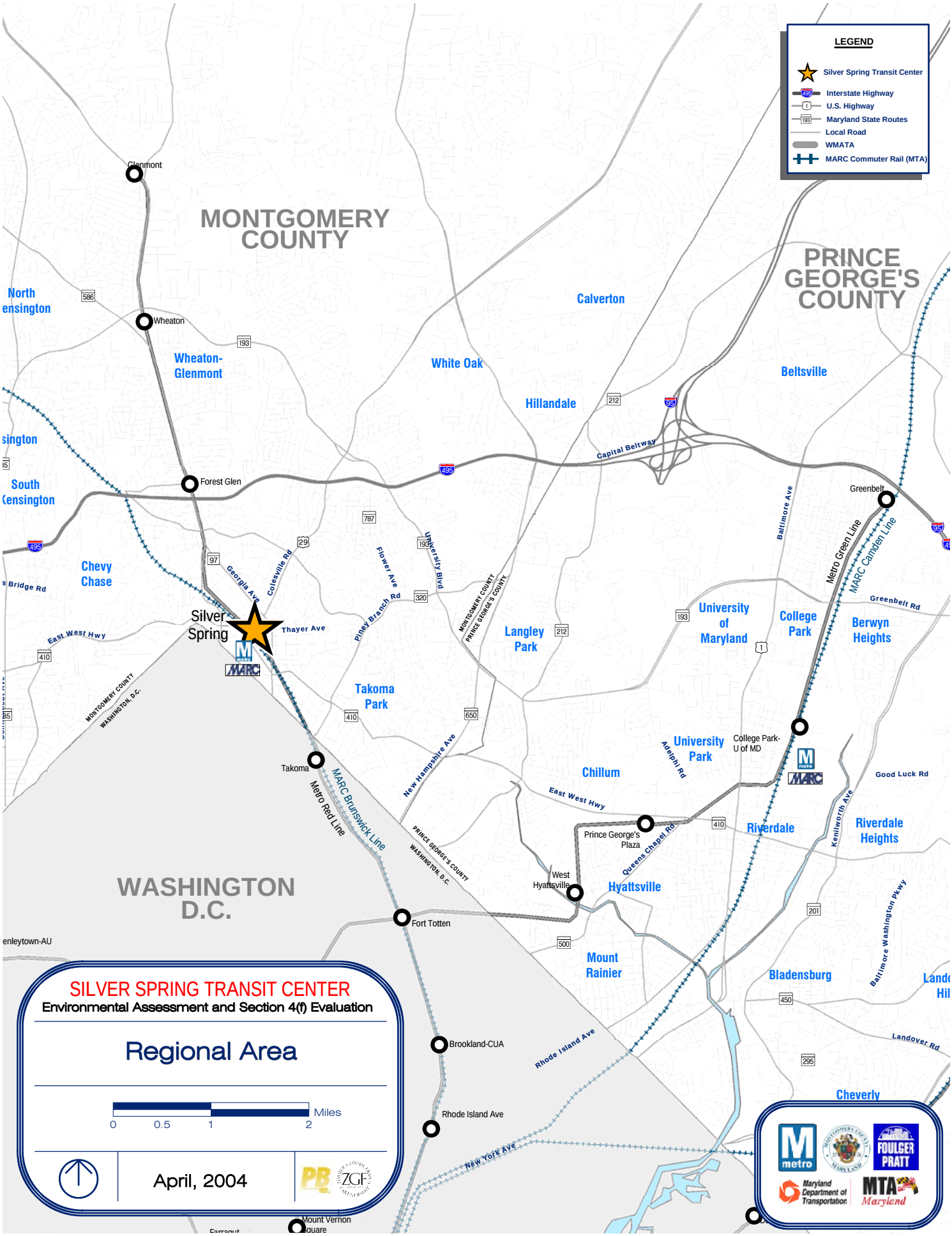
LEGEND
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Silver Spring
Takoma
Takoma Park
Langley Park
Calverton
White Oak
Hillandale
Beltsville
Capital Beltway
Greenbelt
University of Maryland
College Park
Berwyn Heights
College Park-U of MD
University Park
Chillum
Prince George's Plaza
West Hyattsville
Hyattsville
Riverdale
Riverdale Heights
Mount Rainier
Bladensburg
Cheverly
Fort Totten
Brookland-CUA
Rhode Island Ave
Mount Vernon Square
Georgia Ave
Colesville Rd
Flower Ave
Piney Branch Rd
University Blvd
Baltimore Ave
Metro Green Line
MARC Camden Line
Greenbelt Rd
East West Hwy
Thayer Ave
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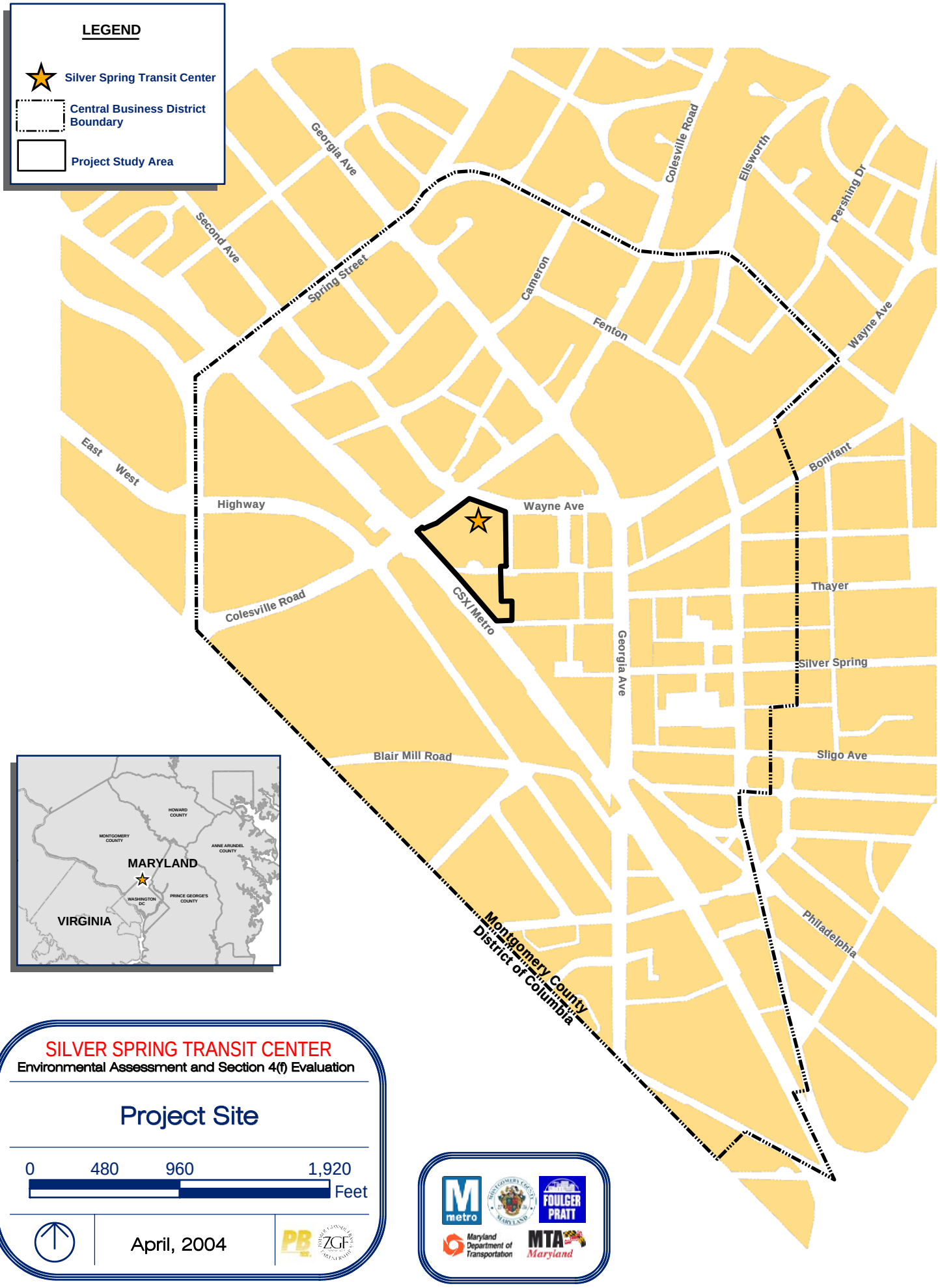

SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER

Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

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metro Montgomery County Maryland FOULGER PRATT

Maryland Department of Transportation MTA Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Albert J. Genetti, Jr., P.E.
Director

April 8, 2004

Mr. John P. Wolflin
Supervisor, Chesapeake Bay Field Office
U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
1825 Virginia Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center
Request for information regarding rare, threatened, endangered species and unique habitats

Dear Mr. Wolflin:

Montgomery County and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) have reinitiated the Silver Spring Transit Center project that will create a full service intermodal transit center incorporating terminals for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Metro, MARC commuter rail, the future Bi-County Transitway, Metro bus, Montgomery County Ride-On bus, University of Maryland Shuttle bus, Inter-City bus, provisions for bicycles and pedestrians, a kiss-and-ride area, and taxis. The project site is south of Colesville Road and west of Ramsey Avenue in Silver Spring, Maryland (see attached map).

In July 2000, the MTA published an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Silver Spring Transit Center project. Since then, the project scope has changed to include joint development. The project will now also include public spaces consisting of a park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza, as well as a private component, including an office building, retail space along Colesville Road, a residential building with underground parking, and a hotel.

The project includes the following components:

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- A 9-12 story full-service hotel with approximately 195 rooms;
- A 10-14 story apartment building(s) with approximately 260 units;
- A park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza;
- Infrastructure (road improvements and utility connections), amenities and open space required in connection with these joint development (private) opportunities.

In correspondence dated August 19, 1998, your office indicated "Except for occasional transient individuals, no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project impact area". We have enclosed a copy of the 1998 correspondence for your reference. Since your office may have received additional data since 1998, a current determination of federal-listed or proposed-for-listing rare, endangered or threatened species or unique habitats present within 1,500 feet of the project site is requested.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact me at (240) 777-6071 or shri.gondhalekar@montgomerycountymd.gov

Sincerely,

Shri Gondhalekar AIA, Architect

SG:ahe

Enclosures

cc: Diane Ratcliff, MTA
Steve Plano, PB
Project file
Read file

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Chesapeake Bay Field Office
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401

95116-04

Mike R
Harry C

August 19, 1998

Mr. Harold Canfield
Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
72 Loveton Circle
Baltimore, MD 21152-0949

RE: Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center: JMT Job No. 295116.04; Montgomery County, MD

Dear Mr. Canfield:

This responds to your July 29, 1998, request for information on the presence of species which are federally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened within the above referenced project area. We have reviewed the information you enclosed and are providing comments in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Except for occasional transient individuals, no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project impact area. Therefore, no Biological Assessment or further Section 7 Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required. Should project plans change, or if additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

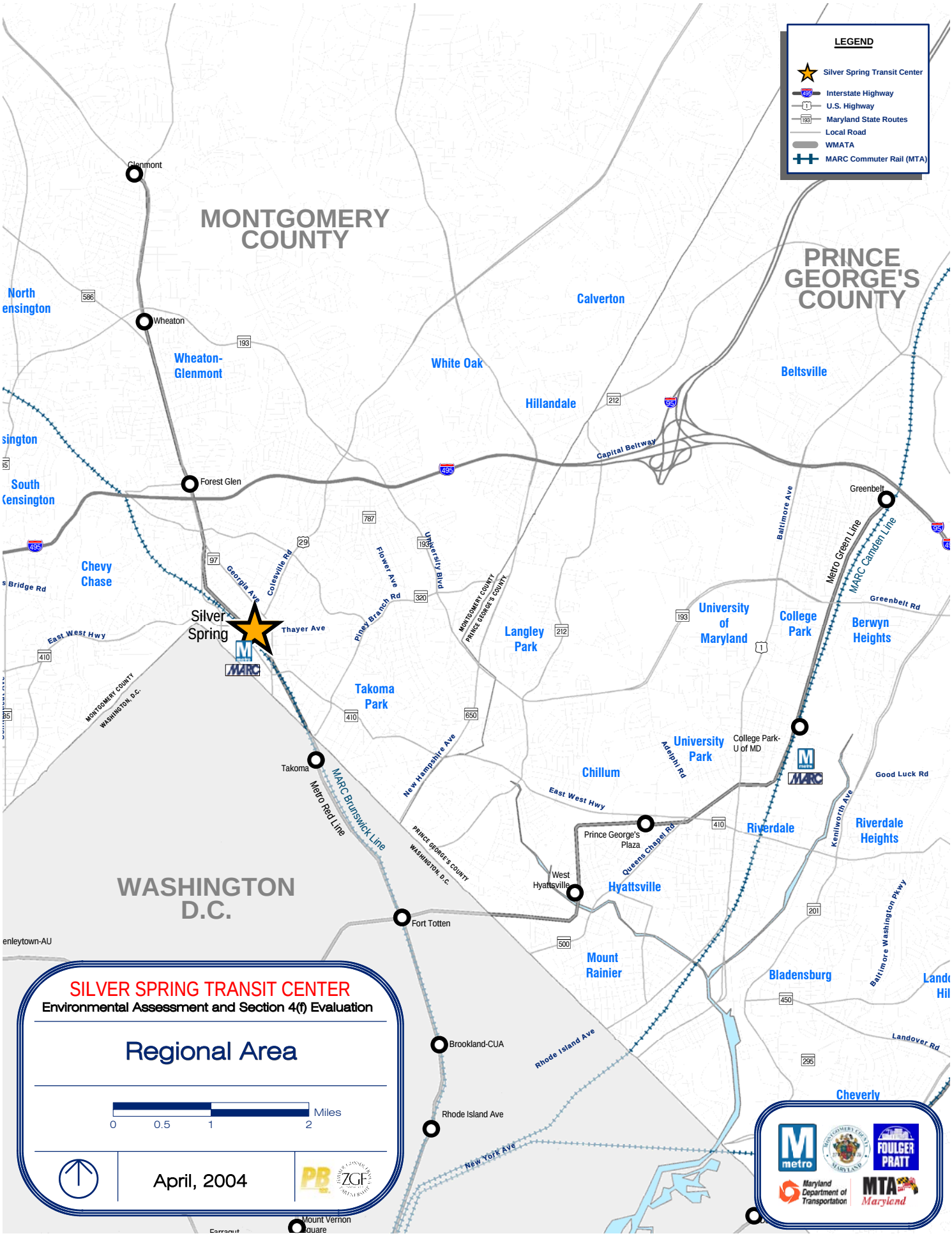
This response relates only to federally protected threatened or endangered species under our jurisdiction. For information on the presence of other rare species, you should contact Ms. Lori Byrne of the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Division at (410) 260-8570.

An additional concern of the Service is wetlands protection. Federal and state partners of the Chesapeake Bay Program have adopted an interim goal of no overall net loss of the Basin's remaining wetlands, and the long term goal of increasing the quality and quantity of the Basin's wetlands resource base. Because of this policy and the functions and values wetlands perform, the Service recommends avoiding wetland impacts. All wetlands within the project area should be identified, and if construction in wetlands is proposed, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, should be contacted for permit requirements. They can be reached at (410) 962-3670.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information relative to fish and wildlife issues, and thank you for your interest in these resources. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Andy Moser at (410) 573-4537.

Sincerely,

John P. Wolflin
Supervisor
Chesapeake Bay Field Office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Forest Glen
Chevy Chase
Silver Spring
Takoma
Takoma Park
Langley Park
Calverton
White Oak
Hillandale
Beltsville
Capital Beltway
Greenbelt
University of Maryland
College Park
Berwyn Heights
College Park-U of MD
University Park
Chillum
Prince George's Plaza
West Hyattsville
Hyattsville
Riverdale
Riverdale Heights
Mount Rainier
Bladensburg
Cheverly
Fort Totten
Brookland-CUA
Rhode Island Ave
Mount Vernon Square
Georgia Ave
Colesville Rd
Flower Ave
Piney Branch Rd
University Blvd
Baltimore Ave
Metro Green Line
MARC Camden Line
Greenbelt Rd
East West Hwy
Thayer Ave
MARC Brunswick Line
Metro Red Line
New Hampshire Ave
Adelphi Rd
Queens Chapel Rd
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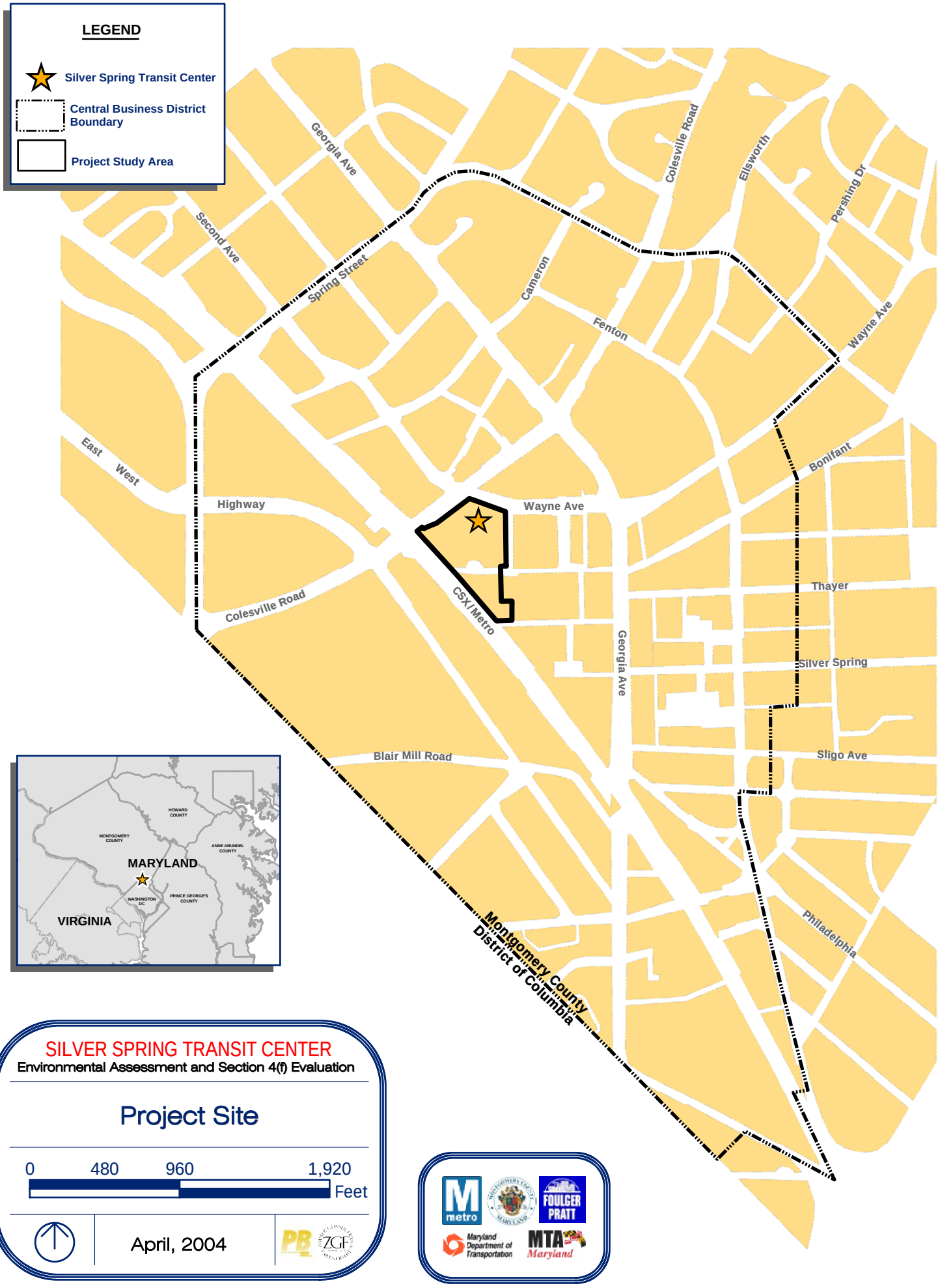
MTA Maryland



SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER

Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Project Site

0 480 960 1,920 Feet

April, 2004

PB ZGF

metro Montgomery County Maryland FOULGER PRATT

Maryland Department of Transportation MTA Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Albert J. Genetti, Jr., P.E.
Director

April 8, 2004

Ms. Lori Byrne
Environmental Review Specialist
MD DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service
Tawes Building, E-1
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center
Request for information regarding rare, threatened, endangered wildlife and plant species and unique habitats

Dear Ms. Byrne:

Montgomery County and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) have reinitiated the Silver Spring Transit Center project that will create a full service intermodal transit center incorporating terminals for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Metro, MARC commuter rail, the future Bi-County Transitway, Metro bus, Montgomery County Ride-On bus, University of Maryland Shuttle bus, Inter-City bus, provisions for bicycles and pedestrians, a kiss-and-ride area, and taxis. The project site is south of Colesville Road and west of Ramsey Avenue in Silver Spring, Maryland (see attached map).

In July 2000, the MTA published an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Silver Spring Transit Center project. Since then, the project scope has changed to include joint development. The project will now also include public spaces consisting of a park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza, as well as a private component, including an office building, retail space along Colesville Road, a residential building with underground parking, and a hotel.

The project includes the following components:

- Bus bays for WMATA and Montgomery County buses, an intercity bus terminal with ticketing facilities and bus bays, Kiss-and-Ride spaces, taxi spaces, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- A 3-story intermodal transit center;
- A 9-12 story office building with approximately 200,000 gross square feet of class A office space;

- A 9-12 story full-service hotel with approximately 195 rooms;
- A 10-14 story apartment building(s) with approximately 260 units;
- A park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza;
- Infrastructure (road improvements and utility connections), amenities and open space required in connection with these joint development (private) opportunities.

In correspondence dated August 31, 1998, your office indicated no records for federal or state rare, threatened or endangered plants or animals within the project site". We have enclosed a copy of the 1998 correspondence for your reference. Since your office may have received additional data since 1998, a current determination of state-listed or proposed-for-listing rare, endangered or threatened wildlife and plant species, or unique habitats present within 1,500 feet of the project site is requested.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact me at (240) 777-6071 or shri.gondhalekar@montgomerycountymd.gov

Sincerely,

Shri Gondhalekar AIA, Architect

SG:ahe

Enclosures

cc: Diane Ratcliff, MTA
Steve Plano, PB
Project file
Read file

SEP - 4 1998

Parris N. Glendening
Governor

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Forest, Wildlife and Heritage Service
Tawes State Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

John R. Griffin
Secretary

Carolyn D. Davis
Deputy Secretary

August 31, 1998

Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
ATTN.: Harold Canfield, Environmental Specialist
72 Loveton Circle
Baltimore, MD 21152-0949

RE: **Assessment of Rare, Threatened & Endangered Species - Proposed Silver Spring Transit Station, JMT Job. No. 395116.04, Montgomery County, Maryland.**

Dear Mr. Canfield:

The Wildlife and Heritage Division has no records for Federal or State rare, threatened or endangered plants or animals within this project site. This statement should not be interpreted as meaning that no rare, threatened or endangered species are present. Such species could be present but have not been documented because an adequate survey has not been conducted or because survey results have not been reported to us.

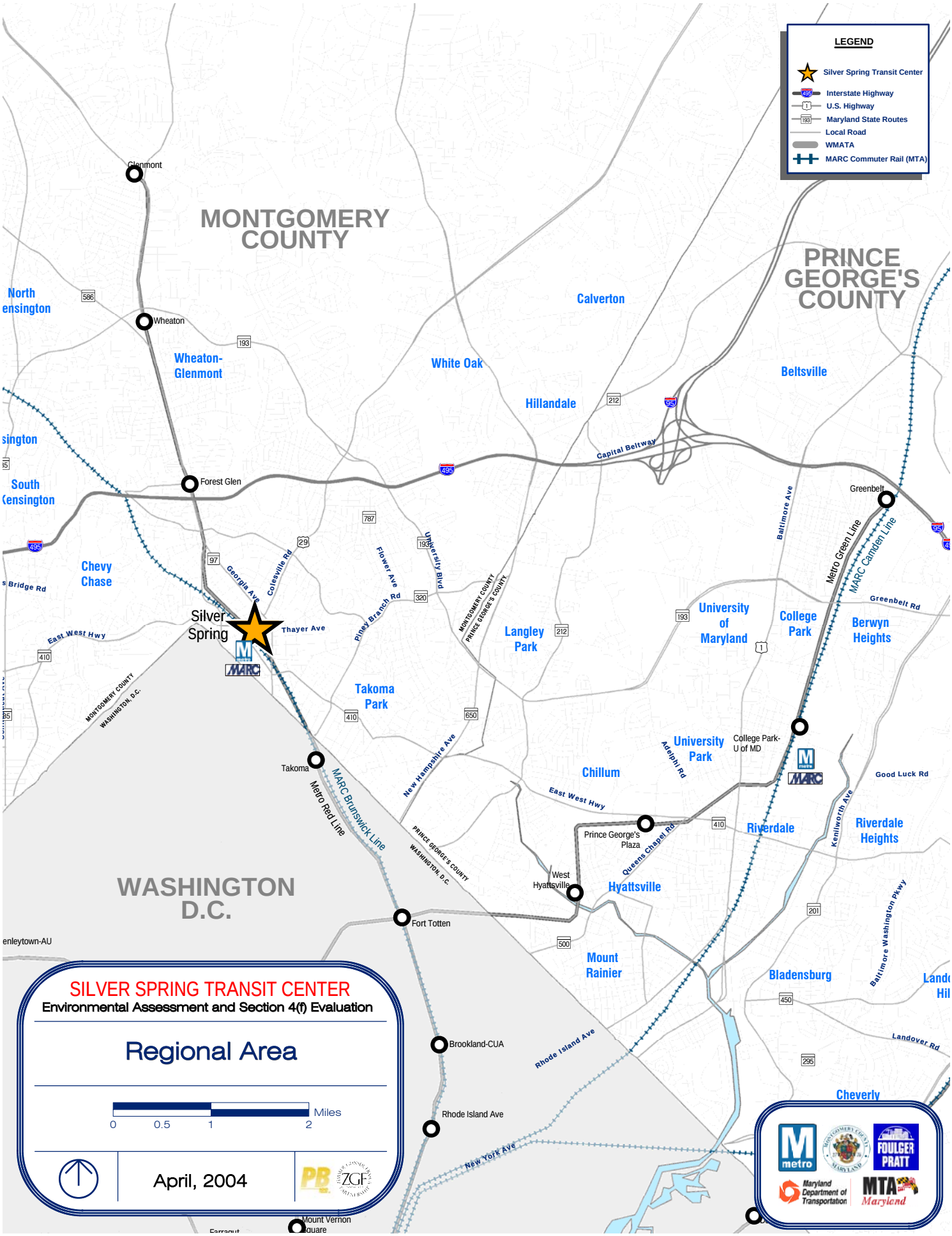
Sincerely,

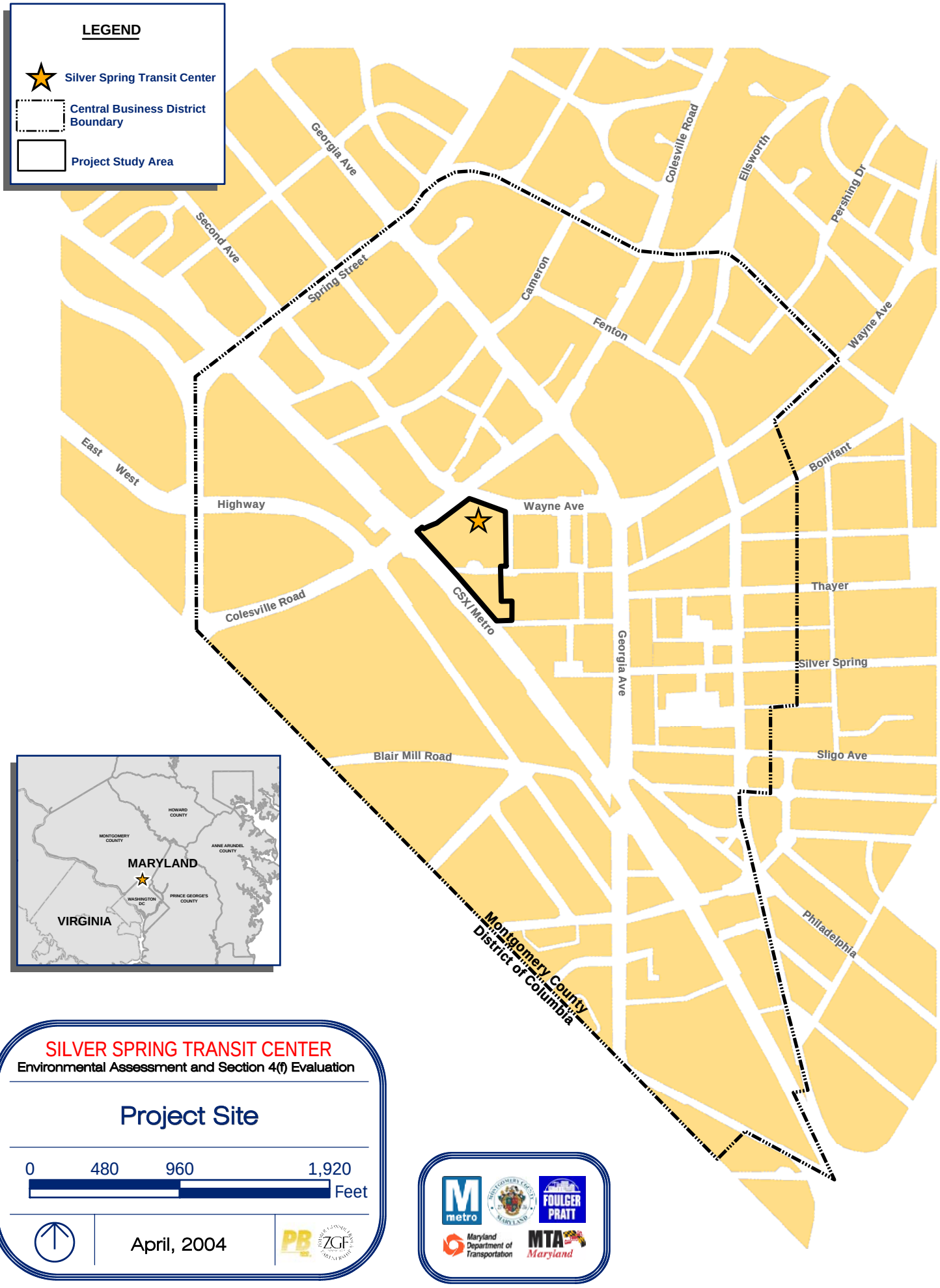
Michael E. Slattery

Michael E. Slattery,
Director,
Wildlife & Heritage Division

ER# 98.1199.MO

Telephone: (410) 260-8540
DNR TTY for the Deaf: (410) 260-8835


LEGEND
Silver Spring Transit Center
Interstate Highway
U.S. Highway
Maryland State Routes
Local Road
WMATA
MARC Commuter Rail (MTA)
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
WASHINGTON D.C.
Glenmont
Wheaton
Wheaton-Glenmont
North Kensington
South Kensington
Forest Glen
Chevy Chase
Silver Spring
Takoma
Takoma Park
Langley Park
Calverton
White Oak
Hillandale
Beltsville
Capital Beltway
Greenbelt
University of Maryland
College Park
Berwyn Heights
College Park-U of MD
University Park
Chillum
Prince George's Plaza
West Hyattsville
Hyattsville
Riverdale
Riverdale Heights
Mount Rainier
Bladensburg
Cheverly
Fort Totten
Brookland-CUA
Rhode Island Ave
Mount Vernon Square
Georgia Ave
Colesville Rd
Flower Ave
Piney Branch Rd
University Blvd
Baltimore Ave
Metro Green Line
MARC Camden Line
Greenbelt Rd
East West Hwy
Thayer Ave
MARC Brunswick Line
Metro Red Line
New Hampshire Ave
Adelphi Rd
Queens Chapel Rd
Kenilworth Ave
Good Luck Rd
Baltimore Washington Pkwy
Landover Rd
New York Ave
SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Regional Area
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
April, 2004
PB
ZGF
metro
FOULGER PRATT
Maryland Department of Transportation
MTA Maryland



SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER

Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Project Site

0 480 960 1,920 Feet

April, 2004

PB ZGF

metro Montgomery County Maryland FOULGER PRATT

Maryland Department of Transportation MTA Maryland

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Michael S. Steele
Lt. Governor

C. Ronald Franks
Secretary

W. P. Jensen
Deputy Secretary

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Tawes State Office Building
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

April 30, 2004

Shri Gondhalekar AIA, Architect
Department of Public Works
And Transportation
101 Monroe St., 11th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850-2540

RE: Environmental Review for Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center, Colesville Rd., Ramsey Ave., Montgomery Co., MD.

Dear M' Gondhalekar:

The Wildlife and Heritage Service has determined that there are no State or Federal records for rare, threatened or endangered species within the boundaries of the project site as delineated. As a result, we have no specific comments or requirements pertaining to protection measures at this time. This statement should not be interpreted however as meaning that rare, threatened or endangered species are not in fact present. If appropriate habitat is available, certain species could be present without documentation because adequate surveys have not been conducted. It is also important to note that the utilization of state funds, or the need to obtain a state authorized permit may warrant additional evaluations that could lead to protection or survey recommendations by the Wildlife and Heritage Service. If this project falls into one of these categories, please contact us for further coordination.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to review this project. If you should have any further questions regarding this information, please contact me at (410) 260-8573.

Sincerely,

Lori A. Byrne

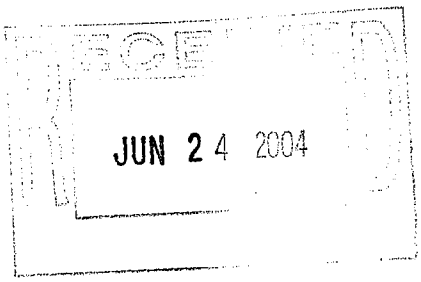
Lori A. Byrne,
Environmental Review Coordinator
Wildlife and Heritage Service
MD Dept. of Natural Resources

ER #2004.0742.mo

Copy Given to Jerry on 5/6/04

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Chesapeake Bay Field Office
177 Admiral Cochrane Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401



June 15, 2004

Shri Gondhalekar AIA
Architect
Department of Public Works and Transportation
Division of Capital Development-Design Section
101 Monroe St., Eleventh floor
Rockville, MD 20850-2540

RE: *Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center, Request for information regarding rare, threatened, endangered species and unique habitats, Montgomery County, MD*

Dear Shri Gondhalekar:

This responds to your letter, received April 22, 2004, requesting information on the presence of species which are federally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened within the vicinity of the above reference project area. We have reviewed the information you enclosed and are providing comments in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Except for occasional transient individuals, no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project impact area. Therefore, no Biological Assessment or further section 7 Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required. Should project plans change, or if additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

This response relates only to federally protected threatened or endangered species under our jurisdiction. For information on the presence of other rare species, you should contact Lori Byrne of the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Division at (410) 260-8573.

An additional concern of the Service is wetlands protection. Federal and state partners of the Chesapeake Bay Program have adopted an interim goal of no overall net loss of the Basin's remaining wetlands, and the long term goal of increasing the quality and quantity of the Basin's wetlands resource base. Because of this policy and the functions and values wetlands perform, the Service recommends avoiding wetland impacts. All wetlands within the project area should be identified, and if construction in wetlands is proposed, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Baltimore District, should be contacted for permit requirements. They can be reached at (410) 962-3670.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information relative to fish and wildlife issues, and thank you for your interests in these resources. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Maricela Constantino at (410) 573-4542.

Sincerely,

G. A. Moser

G. Andrew Moser
Acting Program Supervisor, Threatened and Endangered Species

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Albert J. Genetti, Jr., P.E.
Director

July 16, 2004

Mr. J. Rodney Little
State Historic Preservation Officer
Maryland Historical Trust
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032-2023

Subject: Silver Spring Transit Center Joint Development Project
Prince Georges County, Maryland
USGS Washington West (7.5" Quad)

Dear Mr. Little:

Introduction

This letter serves to inform the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) that Montgomery County and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has conducted a Cultural Resources assessment of the proposed Silver Spring Transit Center Joint Development Project, pursuant to the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq) and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1996, as amended (49 U.S.C. Section 303). Based on the results of this assessment, MTA has concluded that this project will have no effect on historic properties within the project Area of Potential Effect (APE).

The letter also transmits the attached Cultural Resources technical report (*Architectural/Historical and Archaeological Resources Related to the Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center Montgomery County, Maryland*, Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2004), which is submitted for your review and comment. The technical report includes project and cultural resource data sufficient to allow Montgomery County to complete: 1) Delineation of project APE, 2) Identification of Historic Properties within the APE, 3) Assessment of Potential for Previously Unidentified Archaeological or Architectural Resources within the APE, and 4) Determination of No Effect for the SSTC project.

Project Description

The Silver Spring Transit Center Joint Development Project (SSTC) site is located in the central business district of Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland. The Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) is just northwest of Washington, DC within the Capital Beltway. The CBD is an area in the midst of extensive revitalization with a multitude of projects, including

both new construction and adaptive reuse of old buildings. The proposed development area for the SSTC is a pentagon shaped block defined by Colesville Road, Wayne Avenue, Ramsey Avenue, Bonifant Street, and the existing CSX Rail Corridor.

A map showing the location of the following features: SSTC site, Silver Spring Central Business District and all previously identified Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) historic properties in the vicinity of the project area is attached **(Figure 1)**. A more detailed map, **Figure 2**, provides an aerial photographic view of the specific project area and indicates those historic properties, which were determined to be within the project APE. A tabular summary of all relevant historic property data is presented in **Table A.**

The Silver Spring CBD is not only an important commercial and office destination, but it also contains the most heavily used transit facility in the State of Maryland. The SSTC project involves a public/private joint redevelopment of approximately eight (8) acres of land to create a full service mixed-use, inter-modal transit center. The SSTC will be located at the existing Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Silver Spring Metro Station that currently serves as a transfer point for buses, Metrorail, MARC and taxis.

The proposed SSTC will be a multi-level, pedestrian friendly complex supporting rail traffic (Metro and MARC), bus traffic (local and inter-city), and automobile traffic (taxi and Kiss-and-Ride). The SSTC will also include public spaces consisting of a park, a pedestrian promenade, and a plaza. The private component of this project will include an office building, retail space along Colesville Road, a residential building with underground parking, and a hotel.

As the most heavily used transit facility in the State of Maryland, the Silver Spring Metro Station already serves as a major contributor to the vitality of Silver Spring. The multi-modal transit facility currently serves approximately 57,000 patrons a day, with 2,500 buses, Metrorail trains, MARC trains and taxis. By the year 2020, the number of patrons is expected to increase by 70% to approximately 97,000. This project will improve pedestrian access to the site, reduce conflicts with vehicle movements and facilitate the accommodation of increased patronage and transit services

Funding

Montgomery County and the MTA will complete the public transportation aspects of the project using funds from MTA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Area of Potential Effects

A project's Area of Potential Effect (APE) is defined in 36 CFR 800.16 (d) as "the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist. The area of potential effects is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking".

The specific APE for this project has a number of distinct elements: 1) the potential direct impact to archaeological resources which may lie within the actual construction Limits of Disturbance (LOD); 2) the potential direct/indirect impacts to historic properties and districts resulting from transit operations (visual, noise and vibration impacts), and 3) the direct/indirect impacts resulting from the development of transit stations.

Silver Spring Transit Center

The Silver Spring Transit Center Joint Development Project is to be developed with a multi-modal transit center which will consolidate existing Metrorail, MARC commuter rail and bus transit facilities. As the transit center development area is anticipated to cover a large area, the APE extends beyond the previously defined right-of-way to areas in the footprint of the new facility and within the immediate view shed and/or potential noise impact area.

Given the density of the suburban development and the height of the existing buildings (20+ stories) surrounding the project site, the simple linear separation between the project area and a historic property was not considered adequate to define the APE. Instead, a Geographic Information System (GIS) methodology (outlined below) was used to evaluate the location of each historic resource relative to the anticipated project APE.

Identification Methods and Results

The proposed location of the SSTC was included in the Study Area of the Purple Line - Light Rail Transit project. This project included a comprehensive survey of architectural and archaeological resources within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the transit center development. This survey not only included all previously documented archaeological sites and historic properties, but also included an evaluation of other potential sites and properties within the APE of the alignment. This evaluation included formal Determinations of Eligibility for a number of previously unrecorded resources, which received concurrence from the Maryland Historic Trust (January 8, 2003).

Although the project location and limits for the current evaluation are the same as the Purple Line study, the SSTC project plans are now more fully developed. As a result, the current evaluation will be able to provide a more detailed and accurate assessment of the potential effect of the project on nearby historic properties and districts. The current re-evaluation utilized GIS resources that provide property data for all the NRHP, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), and MHT Archaeological Sites and Surveys (Data of MHT Easement Properties is also available – however, no MHT Easement Properties were identified in the APE). The property location of all these classes of cultural resources was plotted onto a GIS base map, a recent aerial photograph of Silver Spring.

Cultural Resources

The Cultural Resources assessment was completed for MTA, as part of its consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff by Archaeology/Historic Preservation Specialist, Henry Ward. Potentially

significant archeological and architectural resources were both researched as part of the historic investigation.

Archaeology:

There are no previously identified archaeological sites within the LOD for the proposed transit center. There appears to have been only one archaeological assessment in the vicinity of the project, which represented a Metropolitan Washington Area Transit Authority evaluation of the existing CSTX rail corridor. The report concluded that the portion of the rail alignment in the vicinity of Silver Spring had a relatively low potential for intact archeological sites (Gardner 1976).

The prehistoric site potential for this area would appear to be relatively low, given the lack of higher order streams in the area. The closest significant drainages lay well outside the APE (Rock Creek approximately 5,000 feet to the west, Sligo Creek approximately 5500 feet to the east). In addition, the entire LOD for the project has undergone such intensive development (detailed below), that any sub-surface archaeological remains that may have existed have been completely disturbed.

In general terms, the historic archaeological potential of the project area appears to be extremely low. The historic use of the block adjacent to the B&O Railroad does not appear to have predated 1931, and then was limited to the Ramsey Avenue frontage. The remainder of the block saw commercial development during 1950-70; however, by 1979 the entire block was razed, graded, paved and landscaped, which would have effectively disturbed whatever earlier sub-surface archaeological remains may have existed.

As a result of this low prehistoric and historic archaeological potential and extensive recent disturbance, it is evident that no significant and intact archaeological resources remain within the LOD (archaeological APE) of the transit center and that archaeological field-testing is not warranted. As no archaeological resources will be impacted by this project, a formal determination of No Properties Affected is appropriate.

Architecture:

As previously stated, the project APE was included in a number of previous cultural resource studies including: *Assessment of National Register Eligibility of Georgetown Branch of the B&O Railroad and Structures Along the Route Between Bethesda and Silver Spring* (MTA 2002a), *Survey Findings – Architectural/Historical and Archaeological Resources on the Proposed Purple Line Projects, Bethesda to Silver Spring Segment, Montgomery County, Maryland* (MTA 2002b).

The MTA is confident that these studies and the current detailed reassessment, represents a comprehensive identification survey of the project APE. Based on these investigations, it has been determined that the three historic resources exist within the project APE:

1. Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad
2. Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station
3. Falkland Apartments

The proposed project will have no direct physical impacts on the historic fabric or architectural character of these resources. In addition, given the dense suburban development surrounding the proposed transit center site, anticipated visual, noise or secondary impacts to the historic properties will be minimal. As a result, it has been determined that this project will have "no effect" on these resources (under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act); and therefore, the project will not constitute use of any historic properties (under Section 4(f)).

Review Request

Please examine the attached maps and project data (Figure 1 & 2 and Table A). We request your concurrence by August 20, 2004 that there would be no effects on historic properties by the Silver Spring Transit Center within Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland.

By carbon copy, we invite the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and Montgomery Preservation and any other entity (as appropriate), to provide comments and participate in the Section 106 process. Pursuant to the requirement of the implementing regulations found at 36 CFR Part 800, SHA seeks their assistance in identifying historic preservation issues as they relate to this specific project (see 36 CFR 800.2 (c) (4) and (6), and 800.3 (f) for information regarding the identification and participation of consulting parties, and 800.4, and 800.5 regarding the identification of historic properties and assessment of effects

If no response is received by August 20, 2004, we will assume that these offices decline to participate). For additional information, contact me at the address noted. If you have further questions, please feel free to call me at 240-777-6071.

Sincerely,

Shri Gondhalekar
Architect

SG:ahe

Attachments: A) Project Location Map
B) Cultural Resources Map
C) Cultural Resources Data Table
D) Cultural Resources Report

cc: Diane Ratcliff, MTA
Gwen Marcus Wright, M-NCPPC
Wayne Goldstein, Montgomery Preservation, Inc
Jerry Jannetti, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Lisa Zeimer, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Henry Ward, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Project file
Read file

FIGURE 1

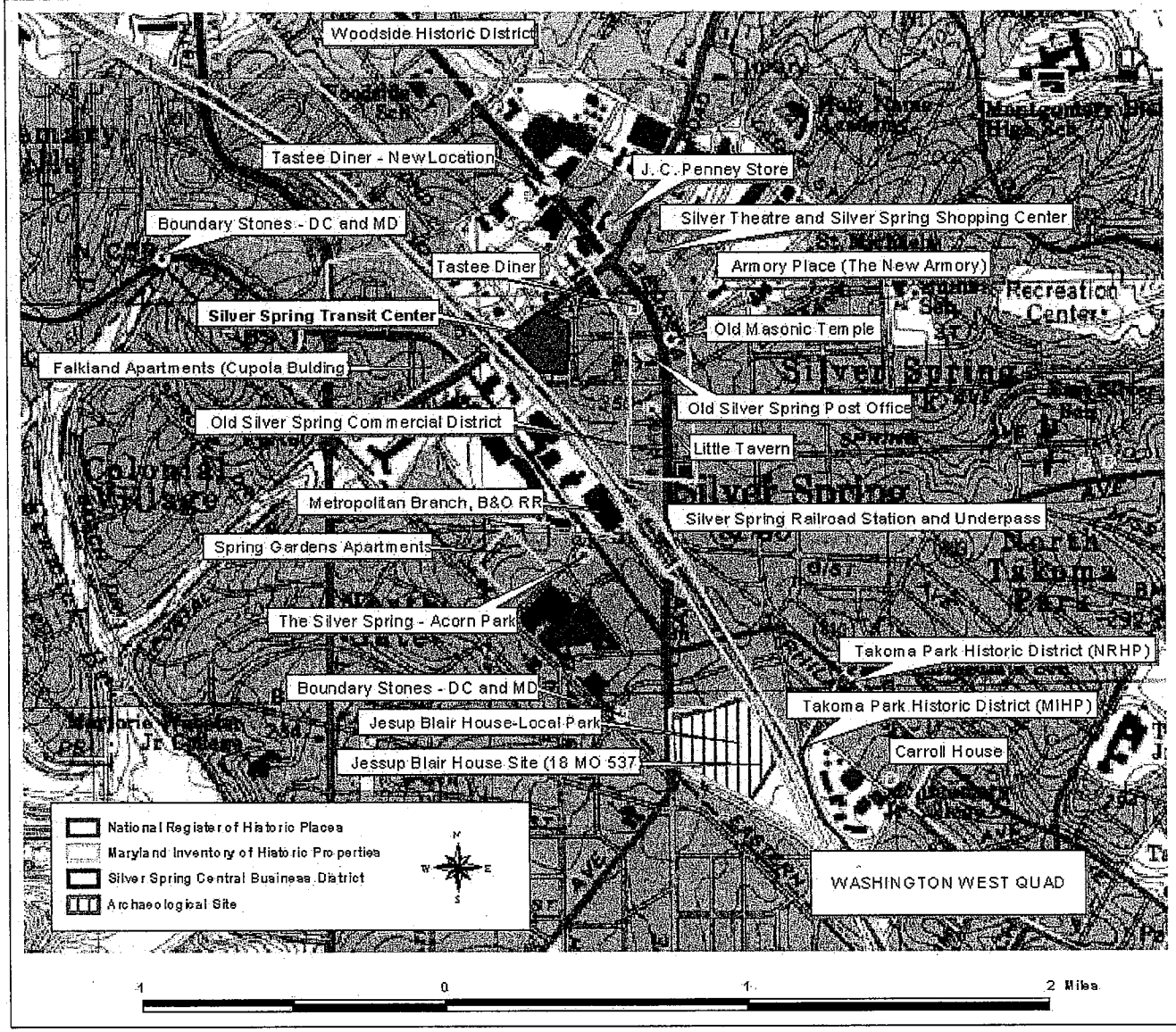
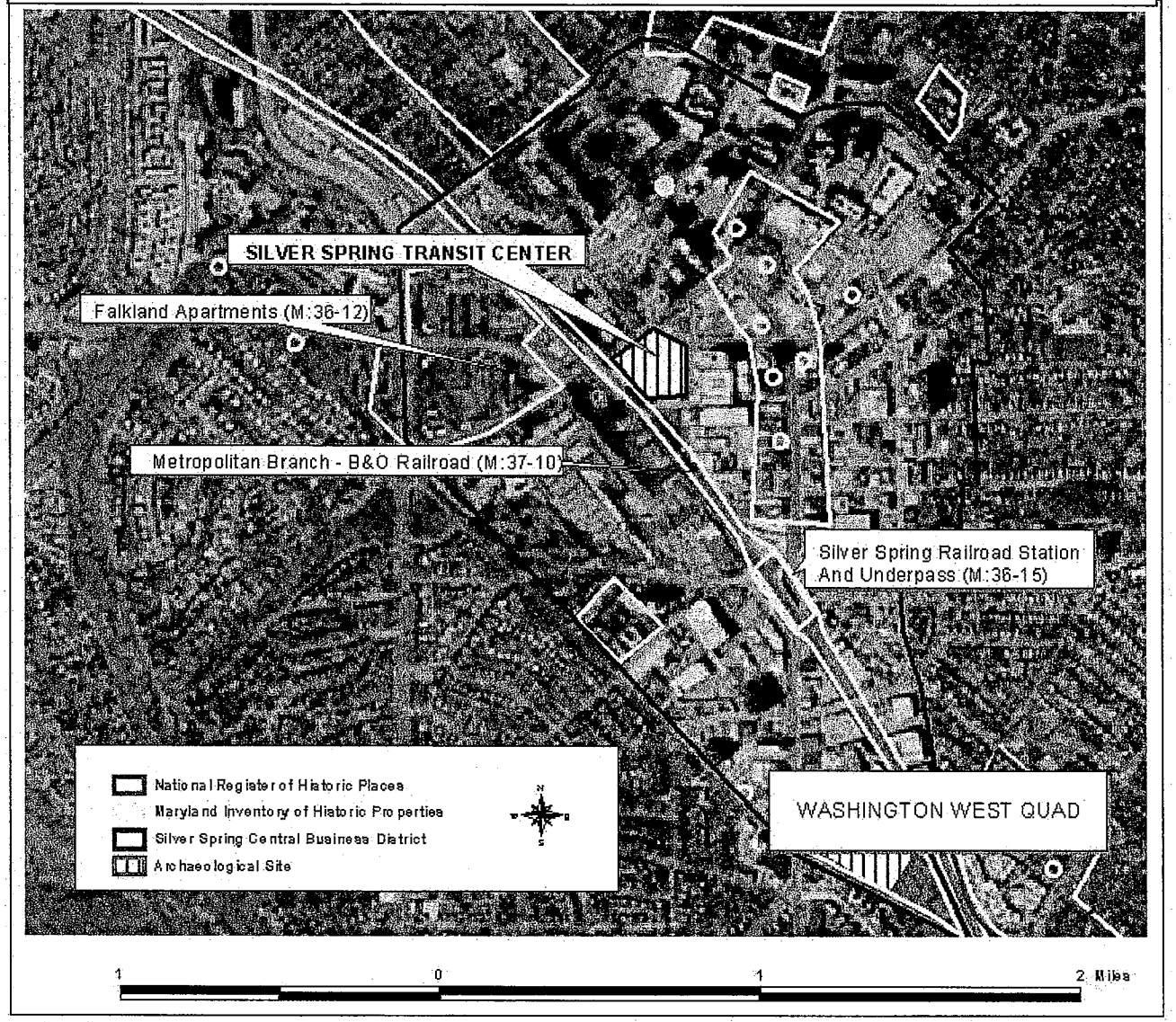

Woodside Historic District
Tastee Diner - New Location
J. C. Penney Store
Silver Theatre and Silver Spring Shopping Center
Boundary Stones - DC and MD
Tastee Diner
Armory Place (The New Armory)
Silver Spring Transit Center
Old Masonic Temple
Falkland Apartments (Cupola Bulding
Old Silver Spring Post Office
Old Silver Spring Commercial District
Little Tavern
Metropolitan Branch, B&O RR
Silver Spring Railroad Station and Underpass
Spring Gardens Apartments
The Silver Spring - Acorn Park
Takoma Park Historic District (NRHP)
Boundary Stones - DC and MD
Takoma Park Historic District (MIHP)
Jesup Blair House-Local Park
Carroll House
Jessup Blair House Site (18 MO 537
National Register of Historic Places
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
Silver Spring Central Business District
Archaeological Site
WASHINGTON WEST QUAD
1
0
1
2 Miles

FIGURE 2


SILVER SPRING TRANSIT CENTER
Falkland Apartments (M:36-12)
Metropolitan Branch - B&O Railroad (M:37-10)
Silver Spring Railroad Station And Underpass (M:36-15)
WASHINGTON WEST QUAD
National Register of Historic Places
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
Silver Spring Central Business District
Archaeological Site
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1
2 Miles

Table A: Historic Properties in the Vicinity of the SSTC (Properties within APE in Bold)

MIHP #	NAME	APE	DOE STATUS	INTEGRITY	EFFECT
M: 35-34	Boundary Stones - DC and MD	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-04	Woodside Historic District	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-05	The Silver Spring	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-06	Jessup Blair House-Local Park	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-07	Old Silver Spring Commercial Area	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-07-01	Silver Theatre/Silver Spring Shopping Center	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-07-02	J.C. Penney Co. Building	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-08	William H. Thompson House	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-11	Old Silver Spring Post Office (U.S. Post Office)	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-12	**Falkland Apartments**	**Yes**	**Eligible (MHT – 08/99)**	**Altered but Intact**	**NE**
M: 36-13	Old Silver Spring - Tastee Diner	No*	N/A	Relocated *	NPE
M: 36-14	Armory Place (The New Armory)	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-15	**Silver Spring Railroad Station and Underpass**	**Yes**	**Eligible (MHT – 08/00)**	**N/A**	**NE**
M: 36-16	Old Silver Spring - Little Tavern	No*	N/A	Demolished *	NPE
M: 36-17	Old Masonic Temple	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-18	Woodside Park Historic District	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-19	Spring Gardens Apartments	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-21	Montgomery Blair High School	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-24	Art Deco Corner Store	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-25	Community Food Store & Tradesman Tavern	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-27	Iva's Market	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 36-30	Talbot Avenue Bridge	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 37-03	Takoma Park Historic District	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 37-03-04	Carroll House	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
M: 37-10	**Metropolitan Branch, B&O RR**	**Yes**	**Eligible (MHT– 08/02)**	**Altered but Intact**	**NE**

KEY: **NPE** = No Properties Affected **NE** = No Effect **N/A** – Not Applicable in this case

Tower 1, 10th Floor
100 S. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2727
(410) 727-5050
Fax: (410) 727-4608

July 21, 2004

Ms. Evelyn Gibson
Environmental Planning Unit
Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Subject: Silver Spring Transit Center
Re: Simplified Forest Stand Delineation (FSD)

Dear Ms. Gibson:

Enclosed are two copies of the Simplified Forest Stand Delineation (FSD); and one copy of the Application (NRI/FSD Review) for the proposed Silver Spring Transit Center. We have prepared the Simplified FSD as prescribed in the Forest Conservation Regulations dated July 30, 2002.

The enclosed Simplified FSD plan includes a recently completed tree survey of the project site, supported by the requisite information required by Section 106 B of the Regulations.

I may be contacted at 410-385-4146 if you have any questions regarding this transmittal.

Thank you.

Very Truly Yours,

Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.

Gregory G. Hoer, RLA, ASLA
Maryland Registered Landscape Architect Number 365

MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY/FOREST STAND DELINEATION
COMMENTS

TO:	Shri Gondhalekar	NRI/FSD #	4-05039
	DPWT	Date Recd	August 5, 2004
		Name of Plan	Silver Spring Transit Center
Phone	240-777-6071	Fax	240-777-6003

The subject Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Plan has been reviewed by the Environmental Planning Division to determine if it meets the requirements of Chapter 22A of the Montgomery County Code (Forest Conservation Law). The following determination has been made:

SUBMISSION ADEQUACY

Adequate as submitted (NRI/FSD plan and supporting information is in Environmental Planning Division file.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approval. Forest Conservation Plan may be submitted. Approval may be subject to confirmation of floodplain and wetlands delineation at later planning stages. If DPS determines a floodplain is present, or if wetland permitting agencies determine wetlands are present, the environmental buffer areas on the plan will have to enlarged to incorporate those additional environmentally sensitive areas.

Please submit a mylar for stamping. When the mylar is stamped by Environmental Planning staff, please submit an electronic version of the plan, with the approval signatures.

SIGNATURE: _____ 301 495-4730 DATE: September 2, 2004
Mark Pfefferle
Environmental Planning Division

Cc: Gregory Hoer, 410-727-4608

ORIG → HO → AIC → ~~READ~~ FILE 200402458
COPY → GON, S
MAS, J

F
FTA
EJC/TJT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION

RECEIVED JUL 21 2004 By

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Albert J. Genetti, Jr., P.E.
Director

July 16, 2004

Mr. J. Rodney Little
State Historic Preservation Officer
Maryland Historical Trust
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032-2023

The Maryland Historical Trust has determined that there are no historic properties affected by this undertaking.
[signature] Date 9/9/04

Subject: Silver Spring Transit Center Joint Development Project
Prince Georges County, Maryland
USGS Washington West (7.5" Quad)

RECEIVED SEP 13 2004

Dear Mr. Little:

Introduction

This letter serves to inform the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) that Montgomery County and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has conducted a Cultural Resources assessment of the proposed Silver Spring Transit Center Joint Development Project, pursuant to the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq) and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1996, as amended (49 U.S.C. Section 303). Based on the results of this assessment, MTA has concluded that this project will have no effect on historic properties within the project Area of Potential Effect (APE).

The letter also transmits the attached Cultural Resources technical report (*Architectural/Historical and Archaeological Resources Related to the Proposed Silver Spring Transit Center Montgomery County, Maryland*, Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2004), which is submitted for your review and comment. The technical report includes project and cultural resource data sufficient to allow Montgomery County to complete: 1) Delineation of project APE, 2) Identification of Historic Properties within the APE, 3) Assessment of Potential for Previously Unidentified Archaeological or Architectural Resources within the APE, and 4) Determination of No Effect for the SSTC project.

Project Description

The Silver Spring Transit Center Joint Development Project (SSTC) site is located in the central business district of Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland. The Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) is just northwest of Washington, DC within the Capital Beltway. The CBD is an area in the midst of extensive revitalization with a multitude of projects, including

Wash. West.
#1A [initials] 9/9/04

HBE: 1B TJT
8/13/04

Division of Capital Development
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